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LITTLE BOOKS ABOUT OLD FURNITURE
ENGLISH FURNITURE : BY A. E. REVEIRS-HOPKINS
VOLUME IV

THE SHERATON PERIOD

POST-CHIPPENDALE DESIGNERS, 1760-1820

ILLUSTRATED

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WILLIAM HEINEMANN

INTRODUCTION

In compiling the first four volumes of this series, covering the four great periods in the development of English Furniture, from Tudor to Georgian times, the writers have very naturally in turn held a brief for each period. In Volume I, whilst extolling the delights of old oak in general, and sideboards, coffers, and draw-tables in particular from the purely decorative point of view, they frankly warned the reader that very little in the direction of absolute comfort could be expected from the farm-house settle, joyned stool, or angular and unyielding arm-chair.

The Elizabethan oak bedstead was practically dismissed as unhygienic, even if, from its extreme rarity and consequent high value, it came within hail of the modest collector. In Volume II (written, as in the case of Volume I, in collaboration with Mr. J. P. Blake), dealing with the Queen Anne period, a claim was advanced that the prevailing curves in the outlines and the more ample proportions introduced under Dutch influence brought the walnut-wood seats well within the range of practical household politics; whilst the roomy wardrobes, escritoires, and

glazed cabinets of the same period have in no sense outlived their usefulness.

In the first volume of the series the writers explained at some length that the books were being written for the amateur collector, and more especially the collector of moderate means. This idea has been kept in view all through the series. The writers have endeavoured to give the benefit of their experience to those who, whilst having no desire to turn their homes into museums, would live with interesting old furniture in preference to equally useful but uninteresting new furniture.

The present volume covers the period of the post-Chippendale designers, from Ince and Mayhew to Sheraton and the Brothers Adam, all of whom lived and worked during the sixty years of the reign of George III. (1760 to 1820). Practically all the furniture of the period is suitable for present-day requirements. This is emphasised in the fact that the bulk of the furniture of to-day is modelled on the eighteenth-century conventions.

A great number of admirable books have been published during recent years dealing with the period, and the present writer records his thanks for the help he has received from them. A short bibliography is included in the volume.

The illustrations have been drawn from the collection—both National and Loan—at the Victoria and Albert Museum, from private friends, and the stocks of some of the well-known dealers in London and the provinces. Special thanks are due to Mr. George Stoner, of West Wickham, Kent, for photographs of fine painted specimens in his collection; to the Hon. Sir Spencer Ponsonby-Fane, K.C.B., for permission to reproduce the Adam chairs at Brympton.

Other photographs, gratefully acknowledged, have been supplied by Mr. C. J. Charles, of Brook Street, Hanover Square; Mr. Edward, of King Street, St. James's; Messrs. Horsfield Bros., of 19 Orchard Street, W.; Mr. F. W. Phillips, of the Manor House, Hitchin; and Mr. J. H. Springett, of 12 High Street, Rochester. Other acknowledgments will be found in the text.

A. E. Reveirs-Hopkins

The Croft,
Upminster, Essex

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

The writer is much indebted to the undermentioned writers and their books :

R. S. Clouston : "English Furniture and Furniture Makers of the Eighteenth Century." (Hurst and Blackett, Limited, London.)

Constance Simon : "English Furniture Designers of the Eighteenth Century." (B. T. Batsford, London.)

G. M. Ellwood : "English Furniture and Decoration, 1680–1800." (B. T. Batsford, London.)

G. Owen Wheeler : "Old English Furniture of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries." (L. Upcott Gill, London.)

J. H. Pollen, M.A., and T. A. Lehfeldt : "Ancient and Modern Furniture and Woodwork, Vol. I." (Victoria and Albert Museum Handbook.)

Mr. B. T. Batsford, 94 High Holborn, London, has reproduced several of the eighteenth-century design books, including "The Decorative Work of R. and J. Adam," with reproductions of all the plates ; Chippendale's "Director" ; Hepplewhite's "Guide" ; and selections from Sheraton's "Drawing Book."

CHAPTER I: OLD FURNITURE AND MODERN TASTE

In the period covered by this and the preceding volume * of this series the last word on furniture was said by the furniture-maker. The Victorian designer could produce nothing better than the chattels made by or under the influence of Chippendale, Hepplewhite, Sheraton, and the Brothers Adam in the eighteenth century.

Doubtless the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, founded in 1888 under the presidency of Sir Walter Crane, did, and is still doing, something for the advancement of taste in household appointments. To give the gist of a clever article which appeared in the *Morning Post* some two or three years since, on the aims and work of the Society: the late William Morris did much to demolish the antimacassar and the horsehair sofa of the Victorian era. But even he did little or nothing to replace that which he demolished. Apparently out of sympathy with the period, or frankly admitting the hopelessness of the task, he did nothing to improve on the lines of eighteenth-century furniture conventions.

* "Little Books about Old Furniture," Vol. III. Chippendale Period. By J. P. Blake.

Steeped to the lips, as he was, in mediævalism he confined his efforts in design to the more distinctly decorative arts. The article referred to puts it very lucidly: "As there are certain things made to perfection in the fifteenth century still suitable for modern use or modern buildings, such as tapestries, carpets, fabrics, and stained glass, Morris, too, in his own way, made these things to perfection. His firm still make at the works at Merton Abbey, tapestry which is technically quite as fine as mediæval work. He also compromised with modernity in wall-papers and cretonnes, materials unknown in his favourite Middle Ages. . . . With all the prestige of Morris and Co., and all the literary and artistic glamour clinging to the aftermath of the Pre-Raphaelites, the 'Arts and Crafts' cannot be said to have left a very distinctive mark on English decoration in the nineteenth century. . . So you are often reduced to wondering who, outside Bedford Park, ever possessed the courage to furnish and decorate entirely on the lines suggested by the Society. The most noticeable result of the movement (superficially, no doubt) was *L'Art Nouveau* or 'Modern Style,' as it was called in Paris. This atrocious fashion spread all over Germany and leaked into Italy even. . . . The English public,

which has a keen sense of quality in manufacture if not in art, sought oblivion in the eighteenth century. There was a reaction in favour of the great French periods of furnishing, especially among plutocrats, and this was stimulated by the opening of the Wallace Collection. Those without knowledge affected Louis XIV., those without morals Louis XV., and those without minds Louis XVI. The more patriotic sought for English examples. Those who could not afford genuine Chippendale, Sheraton, Adam, and the like, went in frankly for copies; while even those who could afford luxuries were unwittingly supplied with reproductions in lieu of originals."

It is, perhaps, outside the province of a book of this nature to hold a brief for modern furniture and furniture-makers. The furniture-maker is quite capable of fighting his own battle. But in all fairness it would be simply absurd to suggest that we should with one consent leave off designing, making, selling, and buying modern furniture. In the first place, the furniture-maker must live, and the better his furniture the greater his claim on life. Chippendale and Sheraton were both makers of modern furniture in their own days. They lived by their craft, and being master craftsmen and designers their fame is undying.

In the second place there certainly is not enough of the old-time furniture to go round, and, that being the case, it is just as well that the desire to possess it is not universal.

The mere possession of but one or two really good—albeit simple—pieces of old furniture has in itself a humanising influence. It is good to look forward and it is good to look backwards. A piece of old furniture to the person of even small imagination is a lovable thing from its association, real or imagined; and, furthermore, it is an educator in good taste. The man or woman who has learnt to justly appreciate a Chippendale cabinet, a Hepplewhite chair, or a Sheraton side-table will scarcely go far wrong in the selection of modern appointments for his or her rooms. To such enlightened beings the hideosities of the Early Victorian workshop or the still worse atrocities of *L'Art Nouveau* will appeal in vain.

But these books are written for the edification of the collector, or would-be collector, of old furniture, and more particularly for the collector with moderate means. We suggest that the furniture of the period covered by this and the preceding volume is eminently suitable for almost all modern requirements. The strongest evidence in favour of this theory lies in the fact that the majority of the admittedly best furniture-

makers of the day are employing the same materials used by, and copying, or at least adapting, the styles of the eighteenth-century designers. For generations Tottenham Court Road has been the home, or rather the temporary sojourning-place of furniture, and, perhaps, Curtain Road its birthplace. The question may be asked, "Can any good come out of Tottenham Court Road?" We answer emphatically, yes. The very name has become a byword and a peg on which to hang cheap witticisms. A very eminent statesman was once severely and quite properly censured for speaking disrespectfully of that historic thoroughfare. Like another road, it is paved with good intentions, and the more catholic our taste in furniture the more likelihood of its rendering goods compatible with those intentions.

The high prices obtained at auction during recent years for admittedly finest specimens of Georgian mahogany, satin, and other fancy-wood furniture have given an impetus to the market for the humbler grade contemporary chattels which adorned the homes of the middle classes. In mid-Victorian times many a fine old leather-seated Spanish mahogany chair of simple Chippendale, Hepplewhite, or Sheraton design, with a shaky leg or weak back (which could have been cured at the cost of a few shillings), has been

consigned to the limbo of the lumber-room and supplanted by the horsehair upholstered suites of light-toned mahogany or pseudo-French walnut creations with red or green rep coverings, which we still find in the houses of our friends who furnished, say, before the 'eighties.

Taking the best of these Victorian productions, little or no fault can be found with their material or workmanship: but from an artistic standpoint they are as dead and meaningless as the architecture of the period.

The ecclesiastical architecture of the early to mid nineteenth century is distinguished by a quite appropriate name, "Churchwarden." It, and the contemporary furniture, belongs to an age when the designing arts were moribund if not quite dead. The cleric had long since ceased to be an architect, apparently felt little interest in ecclesiastical architecture, and it was left to the unimaginative churchwarden to raise a purely utilitarian edifice which apparently satisfied the no less dull-witted worshippers. And it was much the same with household furniture and adornments.

In the eighteenth century the dwellers in cottage homes were content with simple unpretentious deal tables and chairs of beech, oak, elm, and other homely woods of the countryside.

With the wave of commercial prosperity, which came with the rapid rise of the railways in the nineteenth century, a desire for something more pretentious overran the country, resulting in a flood of cheap stained or veneered imitations of that which, for want of a better name, we will call the Churchwarden style of furniture of the middle classes, a style which, with all its heavy ugliness, had at least two virtues to recommend it—solidity and honesty. Make-believe was the last thing attempted in such goods. It was quite a common proceeding for the buyer to choose a suite of furniture "in the white" (in which state the least blemish in wood and workmanship was easily discernible), and to have it toned, polished, and upholstered to taste.

A recent visit to a "Royal Hotel" ("Established 1840") some twenty miles from the Metropolis, revealed a set of Victorian mahogany chairs of such solid proportions that seventy years of life had scarcely shaken their frames. They were frankly "Churchwarden," with, perhaps, the merest reminiscent trace of late Sheraton or Adam about them.

The cheap Victorian imitations in suites of "six smalls, two easies, and a sofa," stuffed at best with flock or at worst with hay or straw, would fall to cureless ruin in twenty years.

Even granting their capacity for true appreciation, the money-getters of the last generation had little time in which to enjoy real artistic refinements in the home. But the inevitable effect of amassed wealth has been a levelling up of society in the second generation. The artistic sense has grown naturally with the refining influences of education, and we now find that things of a bygone age, long since discarded or set aside as being old fashioned and of little worth, are gradually being esteemed at something approximative to their real artistic values.

The lumber-rooms of town and country have, at the bidding of the dealers' agents, disgorged their dust-laden treasures. We know a country dealer, a man of great discernment, who has a large barn crammed with more or less decrepit specimens of mid to late eighteenth-century mahogany. Following out a policy of masterly inactivity, he is in no hurry to effect the necessary repairs and consequent sales. The supply is limited. There is, he says, no Chippendale Golconda, and possibly every year's delay in restoration will add 10 per cent. to the value of the completed article.

As a slight illustration the writer, as recently as ten years ago, bought a beautiful piece of old

Georgian veneered mahogany furniture, in dealer's parlance "A gent's robe with three drawers under," the upper part containing sliding shelves enclosed by two doors with finely matched figured panels. This wardrobe was purchased for £5 from a second-hand furniture dealer in an Essex town. To-day it would be difficult to find a second-hand furniture dealer. All such have blossomed out into "dealers in antique furniture," who would probably ask £15 or more for a specimen so eminently useful and ornamental.

CHAPTER II: POST-CHIPPENDALE DESIGNERS. CHRONOLOGICAL

In dealing with the oak and walnut periods of English furniture we have, for data, to rely almost entirely upon the furniture itself. There is not a single name of any great craftsman or designer which we can associate intimately with eighteenth-century pre-Chippendale productions; and we are but groping in the dark when we seek for the name of any man who made or designed a Tudor chair or a Jacobean sideboard. Such things are merely of the English school, and at best we can but deduce the actual periods to which they belong. Very often such deductions amount almost to certainties, as in the case of the furniture at Knole House, where the retention of furniture, placed there at different periods, has been in the nature of a fetish.

A consensus of opinion assigns a certain chair to Elizabeth's reign or another to that of James I. or Charles II. and even Yorkshire or Derbyshire as the birthplace. Analogy may lead us to think that a particular form of bureau or cabinet was made under Dutch influence, and probably by the craftsmen who came over in the train of

William of Orange. The diarists of the seventeenth century occasionally mention purchases of furniture—sometimes even giving the cost—but do not enlighten us as to the names of the makers or designers. An exception to the rule may be advanced in the name of Grinling Gibbon, who adorned some of our churches and great houses with his inimitable carvings ; but even he apparently essayed nothing in the nature of household furniture more elaborate than a wall mirror frame.

When we come to the mahogany period the study of furniture more nearly approaches that of an exact science. Although not the first maker in England to publish his handiwork, when Chippendale gave us his "Director" in 1754 we had the first record of any great importance in black and white of actualities in household furniture.

Chippendale's is the first great name in a line of eighteenth-century designers ending with Sheraton and the Brothers Adam. In between, amongst a host of smaller men, we find at least one other great maker and designer—George Hepplewhite. Writers are generally inclined to exclude Ince and Mayhew from the epoch-makers, and to place them amongst those of lesser light and leading.

It is interesting to trace the growth of the furniture book from such small beginnings as a book of designs by William Jones, an architect, published in 1739. His drawings consisted merely of designs for mirrors and slab-tables, and apparently left no impress on contemporary cabinet-making. Copeland in 1746 was the first man in the furniture trade to publish a book of designs, and it is well to bear in mind that all subsequent design books of the century, with the one exception of that of the Brothers Adam, were by practical cabinet-makers. So far as the Adam publications, 1773-1822, are concerned, furniture was almost a negligible quantity. They were designers pure and simple whose ideas were carried out by the makers of the day, including Chippendale, Hepplewhite, and perhaps Sheraton. The Adam influence was anything but a negligible quantity. It commenced probably very soon after Robert Adam returned from his studies in Italy in 1758, and continued in full force for a quarter of a century and in a less degree well into the nineteenth century.

The Adam style was succeeded by that of the "English Empire," which may be considered as the beginning of the decadence in English furniture which culminated in the productions of early to mid-Victorian times.

Taking the post-Chippendale designers and their books in chronological order, hard on the heels of Chippendale, the high priest of mahogany, who published the first edition of his "Director" in 1754, we have:

Ince and Mayhew's "The Universal System of Household Furniture," in 1762.

R. Manwaring's "The Cabinet and Chair Maker's Real Friend and Companion" in 1765, and "The Chair Maker's Guide" in 1766.

Robert and James Adam's three volumes on architecture issued in parts from 1773.

A. Hepplewhite and Co.'s "Cabinet Maker and Upholsterer's Guide" in 1788, with second and third editions in 1789 and 1794.

Thomas Shearer's "Cabinet Maker's London Book of Prices" in 1788.

Thomas Sheraton's "The Cabinet Maker and Upholsterer's Drawing Book" in 1791 to 1794; "The Cabinet Dictionary" in 1803, and "The Cabinet Maker and Upholsterer's Encyclopædia" in 1804 to 1807.

Sheraton was the last of the historical designers so far as published works count, and for all practical purposes apart from the design books just mentioned and a few subsequent "Books of Prices," compiled in the interest of masters and

men in the furniture trade, there is no eighteenth-century literature dealing with contemporary furniture. There is practically no record of the hundreds of cabinet-makers who were working side by side with Hepplewhite, Shearer, and Sheraton, many of them no doubt as worthy of recognition as the few who have been immortalised by their published works.

CHAPTER III: INCE AND MAYHEW'S "UNIVERSAL SYSTEM" AND MANWARING'S "CHAIR MAKER'S FRIEND"

"In furnishing all should be with Propriety—Elegance should always be joined with a peculiar Neatness through the whole house, or otherwise an immense Expence may be thrown away to no Purpose either in Use or Appearance; and with the same Regard any Gentleman may furnish as neat at a small Expence as he can elegant and superb at a great one." These excellent sentiments appear in the Preface to Ince and Mayhew's "Universal System of Household Furniture, consisting," as set forth in the title-page, "of above 300 Designs in the most elegant taste, both useful and Ornamental. Finely Engraved, in which the nature of Ornament and Perspective is accurately exemplified. The Whole made convenient to the Nobility and Gentry, in their Choice, and comprehensive to the Workman, by directions for executing the several Designs with Specimens of Ornament for Young Practitioners in Drawing. By Ince and Mayhew Cabinet Makers and Upholders in Broad Street, Golden

Square, London, where Every Article in the Several Branches treated of is executed on the most reasonable terms, with the utmost neatness and punctuality."

The book is dedicated to the "Most Honble. George Spencer, Duke of Marlborough," &c. &c. The title-page is very fittingly and elegantly engraved by one of the joint authors, W. Ince himself. We have quoted the title-page at some length to show how very seriously the authors took themselves. Doubtless the book, which is printed in English and French side by side, caused some stir in the world and did much to enhance the reputation of the firm. We learn from Mr. G. Owen Wheeler's admirable book, "Old English Furniture" (L. Upcott Gill), that in 1781 Ince and Mayhew opened at 20 Marshall Street and passed away in 1812. It is quite true that Ince and Mayhew did not, so far as we can judge by the text of their design book, claim absolute originality in all their work, and, as Mr. Wheeler says, being "on Chippendale's lines at times, it is often confounded with the great master's creations. Owing to some little mannerisms and items of decoration, it is fairly easy to distinguish Mayhew and Ince's work *when they have endeavoured in any way to vary a Chippendale model;* but it is distinctly difficult

to trace some of their early work when they faithfully reproduced some Chippendale design, as their carving was clean and clever and their carcase-building excellent."

Of the three hundred designs, the bulk are signed by Ince, and not more than a dozen by his partner Mayhew; but these few are certainly amongst the best in the book. There is an air of charming simplicity about Plate lx, signed by Mayhew, representing a couple of "Burjairs or half Couches," one of which has a fall-down back. Such a deep-seated lounge chair would be an acquisition to any drawing-room to-day.

Plate lxv—dedicated to the Honble. Lady Fludyer—according to the text, "expresses an Alcove with whole side of a room described, fitted up compleat with cushions in form of a Turkish Soffa, a Drapery Curtain in Front, and Girondoles on Each Side."

In Plate xxxii, Ince presents "A State Bed with a Dome Teaster which has been executed and may be esteemed amongst the best in England; the Furniture was blue Damask; and all the Ornaments in burnished Gold, and richly Fringed, the inside and outside of the Teaster are differently formed; it is drawn to an inch scale." It would thus be 9 ft. 6 in. high.

Another plate shows the beginnings of deceit

in the construction of furniture like Goldsmith's

> "*Chest of Drawers a double debt to pay :*
> *A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day.*"

Ince's illustration represents "A Bed to appear as a Soffa with fixed canopy over it ; the curtains draws on a Rod ; the cheeks and seats takes off to open the bedstead."

Amongst the smaller articles are "Voiders," hand trays with fretted galleries, and "Encoineurs," small corner shelves with the lower halves enclosed by doors—the forerunners of the "Whatnots" of Victorian days. These few things are merely mentioned as giving a slight indication of the scope as well as the interesting nature of the book.

Figs. 1 and 2, reproductions of "A Dome Bed" and four "Back Stools" from Plates xxxii and lv of the "Universal System," will show the reader that Ince and Mayhew had not shaken off the Chippendale conventions.

A close study of this old design book will well repay the student of eighteenth-century furniture. Running so closely upon Chippendale lines it will always be more or less a matter of speculation when we attempt to assign any particular piece of furniture to Ince and Mayhew. In defence

of these artist-craftsmen, if indeed they want defending, it may be advanced that all art is but intelligent plagiarism. There is never anything really new in art, and at least Ince and Mayhew were intelligent plagiarists.

Robert Manwaring's first design book, a somewhat crude and unassuming work published in 1765 under the pretentious title of "The Cabinet and Chair Maker's Real Friend and Companion," recalls, in general style, the early work on japanning of John Stalker (1688), of which we gave an outline sketch in Volume II of the series ("The Period of Queen Anne"). But Manwaring lacks the ingenuousness of honest Stalker.

Speaking as mere laymen we can but think that as a friend, philosopher, and guide Manwaring was but a poor reed for the contemporary chair-maker to lean upon. In his Preface he calls attention to one of his engraved plates concerning the Geometrical Review of Five Orders of Columns in Classical Architecture. The columns are, doubtless, admirably drawn and carefully diagnosed. He quotes Chippendale as having advanced the axiom that without an exact knowledge of the "Five Orders" the furniture-maker is a lost being: but as we look through Manwaring's designs for chairs, stools, and settees we fail to discover the remotest trace of any

influence derived from the alleged all-necessary "Five Orders." It looks very much like a lame attempt at giving a fictitious value to a book which at the price of "10s. 6d. sewn or 13s. 6d. bound" seems but poor value even as book prices ruled in the middle of the eighteenth century. We can trace this classical pose all through the furniture books of the period. Possibly the writers wrote with tongue in cheek, and we can well believe the readers did not take them very seriously.

Manwaring's designs for Chinese and Gothic chairs are those of Chippendale run riot. The Chinese frets of Chippendale's chair backs are often saved by their simplicity. Manwaring's are eminently vulgar in their display, and the same may be said of his Gothic creations.

He gives sundry designs for garden and summer-house seats. If any such indeed were made it is a matter for congratulation, on general principles, that they have long since succumbed to the rigours of the English climate. He claims for a series of chair backs with simple slats of vertical ribbon-work that "They are entirely new and useful and are calculated for People in all stations of Life." These chair backs with Cupid's-bow tops, slats retaining the vase outline, and side-posts with the outward turn, are all

in the spirit of Chippendale, and any such pieces cropping up to-day would undoubtedly be described as "Chippendale."

A second work, "The Chair Maker's Guide," by "R. Manwaring, cabinet maker, and others," published in 1766, and printed by Robert Sayer at the Golden Buck near Serjeant's Inn, Fleet Street, contains upwards of two hundred engravings on seventy-five copper plates. The subjects illustrated are almost exclusively chairs, and there is no explanatory text. An original copy in the South Kensington Museum Library contains the book-plate of Horace Walpole, who was probably the most notable virtuoso of his day. Bound up in the same cover is "The second edition of genteel Household furniture in the present taste with an addition of several articles never before executed by a Society of Upholsterers Cabinet Makers &c. containing upwards of 350 designs on 120 copper plates, consisting of China, Breakfast, Sideboard, Dressing, Toilet, Card, Writing, Claw, Library, Slab, and Night Tables," and a long list of etceteras, finishing up with Fretts, Fenders, Balconies, and Signs.

Although Manwaring's name does not appear on the title-page, we can take it for granted that he is one of the "Society," seeing that the first twenty-eight designs are identical with those

published under his own name. We have yet to learn the names of the other contributors. Some writers, amongst them Mr. Clouston, trace the hand of Ince in some of the designs. Sheraton in his "Drawing Book" some twenty-five years later makes disparaging remarks concerning this book of designs, and sweepingly asserts that the dissertation on the "Five Orders of Columns" is the only original matter therein. He suggests that the teachers stand in some need of instruction, whereas, on the other hand, Chippendale's "Director," from which he, Sheraton, declares Manwaring helped himself, was an entirely original work. Such recriminations were much in vogue, and probably were meant and taken "in the Pickwickian sense." But in this particular instance we can scarcely quarrel with Sheraton's strictures.

In turning over the pages of Chippendale's "Director," which reached its third edition in 1754, we feel that we are in touch with a great furniture-designer, whilst the work of Manwaring eleven years later is but a travesty, and a poor travesty at that.

Quite apart from the designs, the book is interesting to the student. In the Preface Manwaring makes some references to the woods used. "Plates 16 and 17 are four genteel

Designs for Ladies' Dressing Chairs and may be executed in mahogany or Lime Tree . . . if the seat rails are lime tree they may be cut out of the solid stuff, if mahogany may be glued on the front of the rail or if the work is narrow and brass-nailed with double rows then it may be glued on the lower edge of the Back Rail and blocked in at the inside." Referring to his "Very Magnificent and Superb Designs for French Settee Chairs," "they may be executed either in Lime Tree or Yellow Deal." With "Back Stools . . . the backs are generally squared in beech." All this rather points to the fact that mahogany was still expensive although Walpole had removed the import tax.

It would not serve any very useful purpose in this book dealing mainly with the Sheraton period and styles to reproduce a series of Manwaring's designs. It may be interesting to note that rustic garden furniture is not an invention of the present age. Manwaring tells us his designs may be executed in natural limbs of trees.

The two illustrations, Figs. 3 and 4, photographed from Manwaring's book of 1765, Hall Chairs and Summer-House Chairs, may "point a moral" even if they do not "adorn a tale."

CHAPTER IV: HEPPLEWHITE AND "THE GUIDE"

George Hepplewhite, who at some time during his career was in business in the parish of St. Giles, Cripplegate, made furniture from 1760. He died in 1786. His widow, Alice, and partners, under the style of A. Hepplewhite and Co., published "The Cabinet Maker and Upholsterer's Guide" in 1788. The dates on the engraved plates range from July to October 1787. A second and third edition followed in 1789 and 1794.

The title-page reads; "The Cabinet Maker and Upholsterer's Guide: or a repository of designs for every article of household furniture in the newest and most approved taste displaying a great variety of patterns for chairs, stools, sofas, confidantes," &c. &c. Forty-seven forms of furniture are mentioned. The Preface suggests (*inter alia*) that "To unite elegance and utility and blend the useful with the agreeable, has ever been considered a difficult, but an honourable task." Very honourably Hepplewhite accomplished the task.

Whilst Ince and Mayhew and Manwaring were still plagiarising Chippendale's designs we find Hepplewhite striking out with independent ideas.

This independence is perhaps more noticeable in his chair backs, which are generally heart or shield shaped ; occasionally the shield is inverted as in Fig. 33. The demi-shield, as in Figs. 22 to 25, is known as the "camel back," from the hump in the centre. This camel-back top is often found quite independent of the shield, being supported by more or less perpendicular posts. The camel back, indeed, is almost a distinctive feature of Hepplewhite chairs, although not purely an invention of Hepplewhite. We trace in it a reminiscence of the "Cupid bow" top of the Chippendale school. If we take at random a dozen Cupid-bow chairs of the Chippendale period we shall find they vary considerably at the outer corners, some having a distinctly upward turn and others a downward curve. In the latter case we find the outline growing much simpler, the hand grasp of the bow gradually disappearing, and in its place we have one simple curve. And so we find as far back as the Chippendale period by easy stages the Cupid bow had degenerated into the camel back, the feature so freely adopted by Hepplewhite.

The graceful backs of Hepplewhite's chairs gave plenty of scope for low relief carved decoration, and we find exquisite designs consisting of small classical vases and festoons of drapery.

The strands of the pierced backs are often interlaced with ribbons.

On one plate in the Hepplewhite design book we find a chair with oval back filled in with splats consisting of boldly carved leaves—two "Roman" leaves enclosing three rippling palm (or perhaps iris) leaves. Another oval back is filled in with Prince of Wales's ostrich plumes tied with a bold knot of ribbons. At the bottom of the oval frame is a shell ornament. Plate 10 in the "Guide" shows two stuffed arm-chairs, referred to in the text as follows: "Chairs with stuffed backs are called Cabriole Chairs . . . of the newest fashion . . . the arms though much higher than usual have been executed with a good effect for his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales." The top of the frame is surmounted by the three ostrich plumes. In this case the term "cabriole" is slightly misleading; but in another illustration of a stuffed chair we have distinct cabriole legs with French scrolled feet resting on circular thimbles or turned pegs.

Hepplewhite's hall chair backs consist of oval shields and, in one case, a classic urn in fairly high relief—a most uncomfortable resting-place for the back of any person awaiting audience.

The legs of Hepplewhite's chairs and seats are usually square in section, either straight or

tapering (more often the latter), occasionally fluted or reeded. The legs sometimes terminate in sharply tapering feet, known as thimble toes. It is generally conceded that the earlier productions of Hepplewhite are square-legged, but a great number of chairs and settees dating from about 1775 and onwards have turned legs and arm-posts. The Hepplewhite book would be no actual guide as to dates, as it was published after George Hepplewhite's death. A particularly graceful turned detail in the arm-posts is noticeable in the shape of a slender vase or amphora, which may be seen in the settee (Fig. 19). This detail will also be found in a Sheraton illustration (Fig. 92). In fact it was much used in Sheraton and Adam furniture.

It is scarcely safe to generalise concerning characteristic details in furniture of a particular maker, seeing that a constant ebb and flow and overlapping is noticeable all through its history.

There is one point in the detail of the workmanship of the period under discussion which is very noticeable. We find on the chairs of the Chippendale School that the back frames and arms, when not practically flat, are carved in relief on hand-worked more or less concave surfaces. When we arrive at the Hepplewhite

period we find the grooving and reeding plane coming into use. In fact, it is quite evident that with the increasing demand for furniture such labour-saving appliances became absolute necessities. The decoration of a Chippendale chair back, to say nothing of the cabriole legs, would be worked entirely with the carver's chisel. Chippendale's was the school of free chisel play. In the average Hepplewhite chair, although we shall generally find the decoration on the splats worked up with the chisel, the top rail and side-posts will probably be deeply channelled and have beaded edges. The legs, if not quite plain and square or simply turned, will be worked up by the aid of reeding or grooving planes.

In the Furniture and Woodwork Section of the Victoria and Albert Museum the student will find an interesting collection of wood-workers' tools, such as chisels, screw-drivers, gauges, routers, and planes. They are all dated specimens, ranging from 1723 to the end of the century. The earliest piece is a trying plane. A moulding plane bears date 1734. The wooden parts of these planes and other tools are all more or less ornamented with carvings, and have probably been chosen for that reason as well as for the dates they bear. We can hardly

think they fully represent the equipment of the eighteenth-century bench.

At the same time it is quite possible, in fact highly probable, that the cabinet-maker made many of his minor tools himself as occasion arose. The ingenuity of the wood-worker is proverbial. A small piece of mild steel cut to shape by the aid of a file, sharpened, and then fixed in a gauge will make a reeding plane practically as effective as anything turned out by the professional toolmaker. Such handy makeshifts would not have been preserved as curiosities.

We have often heard it said that the successful faker of old furniture not only employs old wood, but copies the old-time workman's tools to get the correct effect. We merely mention this, in passing, as there is no chapter on fakes in this or the preceding volumes of the series. The collector must rely upon his own innate judgment, if he happily possesses it, or, if he has it not, acquire it by patient study. In the meantime he must, in purchasing, rely upon the integrity of the seller or back his own opinion and take his chance. We once read a book which set out to be a guide in the direction of identification of things antique. The gist of the advice was "compare those things you possess with undoubted specimens in the museums and draw your own conclusions."

This is the simplest of simple advice, and we scarcely want an angel from heaven or Fleet Street to impart it.

There is a very happy touch about one of Hepplewhite's plates illustrating a wing chair and a "gouty stool" (*see* Fig. 5), reminiscent of the port wine and good living of the period. The top of the stool can be elevated to any angle by means of a slide and ratchet. The wing chair represents the acme of comfort. The high stuffed wings spring from outside the rolled arms. This draught-excluding seat, restful to the head, back, and arms, in conjunction with the stool, would reduce gout to something in the nature of a luxury. We have recently seen such a chair of the period—we say a chair, but there was little but the frame, some old horsehair, and a few rags of canvas—which the owner was willing to re-upholster and deliver complete for £8. From a sentimental point of view it would be good to have such a chair, as it came from Hepplewhite's hands; but an accumulation of germs of a century and a quarter might be an unwelcome addition to the home.

Hepplewhite's illustrations of small stools show some with cabriole legs and French scrolled feet, others with slightly curved legs, and again others with straight tapering legs and thimble

toes. In these striped horsehair coverings are much affected. His window stools have straight legs and gracefully scrolled ends to the seats. "Confidantes," about nine feet in length, consist of a sofa with a corner seat at either end, sometimes so constructed that the end pieces take away, leaving a regular sofa, and forming two independent "Burjier" chairs.

The "Duchesse," he says, is "also derived from the French. Two Burjier chairs of proper construction, with a stool in the middle, form a Duchesse, 6 to 8 feet long." In the Duchesse he illustrates, the Burjier at one end is considerably larger than its *vis-à-vis*, the complete structure having somewhat the appearance of a huge slipper.

In his instructions Hepplewhite says, "Mahogany chairs should have seats of horsehair, plain, striped, chequered at pleasure." He also gives the dimensions of chairs: width from 20 inches, depth of seat 17 inches, height of seat from 17 inches, and total height 37 inches.

Fig. 6. Two window stools from the "Guide." The one with draped valance is almost identical with one at the Soane Museum ascribed to Robert Adam. The same decorations will be found on the fine shield-back chair at South Kensington Museum (*see* Fig. 32).

Amongst minor articles are knife-cases, some with sloping tops and serpentine fronts and others in the form of classic urns from which the tops rise by aid of springs on central pillars. Oval and octagonal "Cellarets, called also gardes de vin, generally made of mahogany and hooped with brass hoops lacquered. The inner part is divided with partitions and lined with lead for bottles."

In the explanatory text of Hepplewhite's "Guide" we find a reference to two plates illustrating the complete appointment of a room. "Having gone through a complete series or suit of Household Furniture we were strongly advised to draw out a plan which should show the manner of properly disposing of the same: with this intent aided by the advice of some experienced friends we here shew, at one view, the necessary and proper furniture for a Drawing-room and also for a Dining-room or Parlour, subject to the following variations: If the object of this plan was a Drawing-room only—on each side the Chimney-piece there should be a sofa, and on the opposite side instead of a sofa, should be a confidante: the sideboard also should be removed, and an elegant commode substituted in the place: the remaining space may be filled up with chairs. For a Dining-room, instead of pier tables, should

be a set of dining tables; the rest of the furniture and the general ordonnance of the room is equally proper, except the glass over the sofa, which might be omitted: but this is a mere opinion, many of the Dining Parlours of our first nobility having full as much glass as here shown. The proper furniture for a Drawing-room, and for a Dining-room or Parlour, being thus pointed out, it remains only to observe, that the general appearance of the latter should be plain and neat, while the former, being considered a State-room, should possess all the elegance imbellishments can give."

This is more than a sidelight. It is a whole row of footlights turned full on to a picture of the period. We do not know if any enterprising collector of to-day has taken the hint and furnished his dining-room or drawing-room purely on the lines laid down by Hepplewhite. It would probably be an expensive affair although anything but an impossible one.

The Hepplewhite room as illustrated in the "Guide" is too large to reproduce in this volume. A brief description may convey some idea to the reader. Taking the four sides in rotation we have:

No. 1. A sofa in centre, flanked by six oval-backed chairs, three on either side; a very

large wall mirror, flanked by two small ones with candle sconces.

No. 2 (opposite). Fireplace in centre, with three more of the chairs each side and two more small mirrors with sconces.

No. 3. Two doors, between them a sideboard, flanked by two pedestals; on the sideboard two vase-shaped knife-boxes, and over it another large mirror with three two-light sconces; four more chairs.

No. 4 (opposite). Four windows with draped cornices; under each window is a window seat with tapering legs and scroll ends; three large mirrors between the windows, and under each mirror is a half-round table. Two more chairs.

The chairs (eighteen in all) have stuffed oval backs, stuffed seats, and cabriole legs. The couch, *en suite*, is very much after the style of Fig. 7, and on it a striped horsehair covering is plainly indicated.

We can only hope that at some time in the near future the authorities at the Victoria and Albert Museum may see their way towards giving us Hepplewhite, Sheraton, and Adam rooms complete. A long-promised Georgian Room is well on the way towards completion, and will probably

be quite ready before these sheets go through the press. We can already find more than one Oak-period room in the English Section as well as old French and Swiss rooms in the Continental Section. To-day, alas ! at South Kensington the mahogany period of English furniture is represented by a chaotic agglomeration of specimens—mostly fine and in some cases quite priceless—disarranged in such a manner that the student is calculated to derive little else than bewilderment. We say this at the risk of being accused of churlishness, whilst fully acknowledging the courtesy and help which has been freely afforded by the directors and their assistants in the Woodwork Section of the museum. Perhaps Mr. Guy Laking may also take the hint and fit out some representative rooms in the London Museum at Kensington Palace.

The following seven examples are chosen from the "Guide" as exhibiting salient features of the Hepplewhite furniture.

Fig. 8 is a graceful sideboard with three drawers and two cellarets. It would obviously have six legs (reeded and ending in thimble toes), but the rear legs are not shown in the engraving. Hepplewhite is sometimes at fault in his perspective. Sheraton in his "Drawing Book" unkindly calls attention to the fact.

Fig. 9, a sideboard of rectangular build, shows distinct Adam influence in the fluting and vase ornament. Hepplewhite and Co. probably made such a piece for an Adam House, and afterwards put it in the design book. By the scale given it measures 7 ft. in width.

Fig. 10, a "Double Chest of Drawers," or, as we should to-day describe it, a tallboy, calls for no special remark. It is just such a simple piece as would be turned out by any furniture-maker of the period. From its very simplicity, when we meet with such a tallboy built of mahogany unadorned with inlays and lined with cedar, we instinctively call it Hepplewhite. By the scale given on the engraving it would be 4 ft. wide and a little over 6 ft. high.

Fig. 11, a "Desk and Bookcase," shows a survival of Chippendale in the shaped bracket feet. The perfect simplicity of outline must have appealed to people of good taste in Hepplewhite's day, and we can well believe that many such were made and have survived.

Fig. 12, a "Library Case," by the scale given is 12 ft. 6 in. long and 8 ft. 6 in. high (to the top of the cornice), and has Adam decoration written all over it.

Fig. 13, a "Design for a Bed," is delightfully simple for the period, and even to-day with

scrupulous care and frequent spring cleaning might be considered tolerably hygienic.

Fig. 14, "Bed Pillars," should help the reader to identify Hepplewhite bedsteads. Such bed-posts have of recent years been sacrificed in hundreds for making up into lamp and flower-pot stands. Four-posters with such finely designed pillars have, if complete and in good condition, a market value of about thirty pounds; whilst the pillars when converted into lamp standards would scarcely realise more than two or three pounds apiece.

Bedroom furniture as depicted in the Hepplewhite guide is eminently suitable for present-day requirements. The four-poster with its draperies may not be a pattern of hygiene; neither is a brass bedstead made in Birmingham if it is not kept scrupulously clean. The housewife who is particular in the treatment of the latter will not grudge the extra care necessary with the former. The eighteenth-century "tallboy," standing 5 ft. 6 in. to 6 ft. high, may be objected to on account of cumbersomeness, particularly as the small drawers which contain the odds and ends in daily use are above the sight line, and it is necessary for the person of average height to stand on a chair to reach them. The Hepplewhite short chest of five drawers with bow or serpentine

front is as perfect as anything of the nature which can be built to-day, and no less can be said of the dressing-tables of the period. The corner washstand errs on the side of skimpiness, but is a dainty little detail in the room, especially if fitted up with an old Spode blue and white, Mason or Davenport Ironstone ware ewer and basin, which would, within a few years, be contemporary with the stand. In any case the washstand is but a side issue, since people have acquired the habit of performing their ablutions outside their sleeping apartments. As to chairs—well, a chair is a chair all the world over, whether built in the reign of George the Third or George the Fifth.

Lack of space precludes more than two illustrations of the heavier Hepplewhite bedroom furniture.

Fig. 15 represents a bow-fronted mahogany chest of four drawers with an inlaid shell ornament on the plinth. It belongs to a period, about 1775, when satinwood inlays were used very sparingly in the form of stringings and small ornaments. The shaped stand is a typical feature of these bow-fronted structures, and the shaped feet are a logical development, in the direction of simplicity, of the brackets of the Chippendale period.

Fig. 16 is of serpentine form, but in this case the stand is in no way a separate structure, the curved feet being continuations of the sides.

Fig. 17 represents a remarkably fine Hepplewhite wardrobe with matched oval panels of beautifully figured mahogany veneer outlined with bands of herring-bone inlay, which are repeated in the drawer fronts. The dentil cornice and bracket feet are reminiscent of earlier Georgian times. The photograph of this specimen, valued at £35, is lent by Mr. F. W. Phillips, of Hitchin, with Figs. 19 and 20.

Fig. 18, a singularly pleasing sideboard, is the property of Mr. J. H. Springett, of Rochester, who values it at £20. It has a central drawer, two drawers at one end, and a deep cellaret at the opposite end, made outwardly to match the two drawers. The front is slightly curved, with a pleasing diversity of line, and the top edge is reeded. The depressed arch supporting the centre gives strength without any appearance of heaviness.

Fig. 19 is a Hepplewhite settee, date about 1780, valued at £20. The legs and uprights to the arms are turned and reeded. The vase detail in the arm-post is particularly good and the seat is upholstered in the original silk brocade.

Fig. 20 is a caned settee with squab cushion.

The middle parts of the arm-posts exhibit fine spiral turnery, which will be found repeated in the next illustration.

Fig. 21 is a child's swinging cot with caned body and hood. The cot is suspended by iron supports, and can be kept at a standstill by two forked battens which slide from the under side of the cot at either end. The framework and posts of spiral turnery are built of solid mahogany. This cot has been used with perfect success by a present-day baby. It was bought for £5.

Fig. 22 is a caned Burgere chair ("Burjier" of the old design books) from a photo supplied by Mr. Reginald Flint, of 7 Featherstone Buildings, High Holborn.

Fig. 23 represents a finely designed painted chair with caned seat, much in the style of Hepplewhite. This and the next illustration are furnished by Mr. C. J. Charles.

Fig. 24 is a fine example of the painted ("japanned") furniture of the period. It is one of four chairs painted yellow. The oval medallions on the vase-shaped splats are decorated with classical subjects much in the style of Angelica Kauffmann.

In assigning positive ascriptions to such pieces as the two last mentioned we are treading on dangerous ground. Fig. 23 has indeed in its

rectangular form much in common with chair backs which we shall find in Sheraton's "Drawing Book" (*see* Figs. 49 to 51). The vase ornament in Fig. 24 is altogether too heavy for anything we should expect from Sheraton, whilst the shaping of the arms would rather point to the later Sheraton period.

Cane-work as applied to English furniture had a considerable vogue during late Stuart times, but fell very much into abeyance during the first half of the eighteenth century. During the late Jacobean period, with the introduction of walnut wood, we find a tendency to lightness in the seating accommodation. The type of chair known as the "Charles," whilst still retaining the quite flat horizontal seat and practically perpendicular back of the oak period, is a featherweight article in comparison with its predecessor. The caned seat and narrow caned panel in the high back, flanked by slender posts and topped by fanciful foliated carving embellished with crowns and cupids, all make for lightness. The spirit continued to a certain extent into the time of William and Mary, until the Dutch influence got the upper hand.

We occasionally meet with tall-backed Queen Anne chairs with caned panels. But with the introduction of the true Queen Anne type of

curvilinear roomy seats the cane-work seems to have almost disappeared and to have remained dormant during the early part of the mahogany period, and till such times when the furniture ceased to develop on Queen Anne lines.

Although there seems to be something incongruous in the juxtaposition of dark heavy mahogany and cane-work, yet we find a few Chippendale caned seats. Leather, horsehair, and tapestries seem to be the natural concomitants of old dark mahogany as turned out by Chippendale and Hepplewhite. It was left to the Sheraton School, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, to reintroduce cane-work with perfect success, in conjunction with satinwood and japanned woods. One begins to wonder what became of the skilled cane-worker in the interim. Did he, like the swallow of the countryside myth, disappear into the limbo of the village horse-pond with the first touch of autumn chill, to emerge again with the first gleam of mid-April sun? Sheraton in his "Cabinet Dictionary" (1803) says, "Caning cabinet work is now more in use than it was ever known to be at any former period. About thirty years since it was gone quite out of fashion, partly owing to the imperfect manner in which it was executed. But on the revival of japanning furniture it began to be

gradually brought into use." He describes the different methods used and the various applications to chairs, bedstead ends, &c. "The commonest kind of one skain only, called by caners bead-work, and runs open; others of it is of two skains, and is closer and firmer. The best work, termed bordering, is of three skains, some of which is done very fine and close, with the skains less than a sixteenth broad, so that it is worked as fine, comparatively, as some canvass."

Sheraton uses the word "japanning" in quite a different sense to its use in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century, when it stood for lacquering, more or less in the Oriental style. In Sheraton's time japanning has come to mean, practically any surface painting of furniture made from ordinary woods, such as pine or beech, as distinguished from brushwork adornments to fancy woods, such as mahogany and satinwood. There are no examples of caned furniture shown in the design books of Manwaring, Ince, Hepplewhite, or Sheraton.

Probably nothing in the way of Sheraton period furniture is so easily distinguishable as a Hepplewhite chair. The following examples show the salient features:

Fig. 25 would, on account of the wheatear

decoration, be classed by some discriminating collectors as a Shearer production. Arm-chairs of this calibre with let-in seats have an average value of about five to six pounds, whilst the "singles" would fetch from fifty to sixty shillings apiece. Sets of six "singles" and two "arms" are by no means uncommon, but are always more valuable in proportion to odd specimens.

Fig. 26 is a type of the country-made oak, hoop-backed chair of Hepplewhite design. These have an average value of from thirty to forty shillings.

Fig. 27 represents a simple mahogany arm-chair of the Hepplewhite school and period. It was bought in mid-Devon, carefully restored and re-upholstered in appropriate green and white striped horsehair. The total cost was £2. The five splats have beaded edges. The seat is shallow with serpentine front.

Fig. 28 is a shield-back arm-chair in mahogany with Prince of Wales's plume decoration in the pierced splat. This chair came from North Ockenden Hall, Essex, where it had stood for many years until some twenty-four years ago. It is still in the possession of a member of the family of the original owner.

Fig. 29 shows distinct Adam influence in the draped vase ornament on the splats. It is highly

probable that Robert Adam was answerable for the introduction of the shield back into English chairs.

Fig. 30, a fine single chair with let-in seat, has the Prince of Wales's ostrich plumes on the pierced splat. The serpentine seat and moulded legs are departures from the earlier and simpler conventions. It has a value of about twelve guineas. Photographs of this and the previous number are lent by Mr. F. W. Phillips.

Fig. 31, a walnut arm-chair at the Victoria and Albert Museum, is also carved with the ostrich feathers. The seat has a modern covering of red moreen fastened with brass-headed nails.

It will be noticed that the last seven examples have square legs and straining-rails. The front straining-rails are morticed into the side-rails, and thus placed a few inches back from the front legs. In the earlier types—transitional from Queen Anne to Early Georgian—these straining-rails will be found morticed into the front legs and are very much in the way of the sitter's heels, although useful at times as rests for the feet in draughty rooms.

Fig. 32, an exceptionally fine example at the Victoria and Albert Museum (official number 1458, 1904), was bought for ten guineas in 1904,

which sum in no way represents its present value. The catalogue description reads "Arm-chair of carved walnut. Style of Hepplewhite. English: late eighteenth century. (The covering is modern.) 3 ft. 2½ in. high, 24 in. wide. Concave oval back, carved in open work, with three ostrich feathers amid bands and festoons of drapery; the border is inlaid with shells separated by bands and grooves. The curved arms are continuous with the front legs, which (like the back legs) are fluted and tapering and terminate in rounded feet. There are no stretchers." This chair shows distinct Adam influence in the groovings, flutings, and fan ornaments.

Fig. 33, an example of the inverted shield, has a value of about £20. The carved rosettes on the fronts of the arms with same motif repeated in oval form at the tops of the tapering fluted legs all lend distinction to a piece of exceptionally fine mahogany furniture, which the owner assigns to an approximate date 1770.

As might be expected, following on the principle laid down in the Queen Anne and Chippendale periods, these shield backs will be found repeated in the settees. We find double, treble, and quadruple back settees, but the "three chair back" is the most usual form.

CHAPTER V: SHEARER AND "THE BOOK OF PRICES"

The compilation of the "Cabinet Maker's London Book of Prices" is usually attributed to Thomas Shearer, and that with considerable reason, judging from internal evidence, although there is no author's name attached.

The first edition was published in 1788 and the second, "with additions," in 1793. It was printed for the London Society of Cabinet Makers, and Hepplewhite and Shearer were both members of the Society. It contains twenty-nine plates engraved on copper. Nos. 1 to 14 and 17 to 20 are signed by T. Shearer. Nos. 15 and 16, consisting of a series of tracery designs for cabinet doors, are unsigned. Nos. 26 and 27, also consisting of cabinet window tracery, are, curiously enough, signed by W. Casement. Nos. 21 to 25 and 29 are simply signed "Hepplewhite." As these plates were engraved two years after George Hepplewhite's death, they were probably the work of a son or other relative.

The designs in some cases are distinctly reminiscent of late Chippendale productions. The first plate in the book represents a break-front writing-desk, 6 ft. long and 8 ft. high. We give a

reproduction of this in Fig. 34, photographed from the book. It will be seen that the writing-slab (upright when closed) is supported on metal quadrants and discloses, when open, an array of pigeon-holes and stationery cases. The right- and left-hand halves of the engraving show alternate designs, a method often followed in the design books of the period. In this instance the left-hand half of the picture shows fan-shaped and medallion details in the cornice, pointing to distinct Adam influence.

Fig. 35, reproduced from Plate 2 in the "Book of Prices," is a knee-hole library table of serpentine outline and a simple bow-fronted sideboard. We shall have occasion to refer to this sideboard in the Sheraton section of the book.

We can hardly believe that Sheraton had any hand in the compilation of the "Book of Prices." He praises it somewhat grudgingly in his own book some three years afterwards; and we may be quite sure if it had contained any of his handiwork he would have proclaimed the fact from the housetops.

Mr. G. Owen Wheeler says, "Shearer is usually described as the Apostle of Sheraton: in reality he was a pioneer whom the latter followed."

In one of the Shearer plates we find an ingenious shut-up dressing-table, containing three mirrors and four drawers for toilet requisites. It is quite a *multum in parvo* article of furniture, foreshadowing the very ingenious and even more elaborate pieces of a few years later. In this piece, perhaps for the first time, we find the application of the tambour, or rolling shutter, enclosing the small cupboard space, underneath the dressing-table. We shall find the tambour in Hepplewhite's design book published in the same year. A dainty design is also given for a writing-table of slender proportions, with a tambour shutter on top (Fig. 36). We have recently seen a very similar writing-table with tambour top enclosing pigeon-holes and drawers, which rise and fall on a spring fitting. It was described as a Sheraton production; but as we cannot find it in Sheraton's "Drawing Book," and we do find it in the "Book of Prices," signed by Shearer, we can only think of it as rightly being a Shearer production. Hepplewhite also illustrates a tambour-top writing-table; but it is of rather more solid proportions. Instead of the tambour curving right over, it disappears under a flat shelf at the back of the table. On the same plate with Shearer's tambour writing-table are two other slender writing-tables (*see also* Fig. 36).

Shearer also signs a plate representing a dainty composite article, viz. a fire-screen with fall-down front, which when open forms a writing-table and discloses an array of pigeon-holes, drawers, and stationery cases tucked away in the four inches of depth. This would doubtless be a charming drawing-room or boudoir accessory, but altogether too unstable for serious work.

Plate 21 (in the second edition) signed by Hepplewhite, October 5, 1792, represents a handsome writing-table with the pigeon-holes ranged on top in the form of a shallow horseshoe; and if we refer to Sheraton's "Drawing Book," we find the almost identical thing under date January 16, 1793, with the addition of a brass gallery and other minor details of ornament. It looks suspiciously like a case of cribbing on the part of Sheraton. Sheraton's edition of this table will be found in Fig. 47.

Amongst the Hepplewhite contributions to the "Book of Prices" we find a serpentine-fronted cabinet of fine elevation, a large assortment of mouldings, standards for tripods, and therms for claws; the last named mostly of the thimble-toe order. Shearer illustrates dressing-tables and minor pieces of bedroom furniture, including small corner washstands with circular holes for basins of small proportions. Some of these stands have

open shelves and others enclosed fronts. Some have hinged splash-boards, which fold down when not in use. We also find small portable shut-up desks, which form writing slopes when opened—the precursors of the desks presented to little boys and girls on their birthdays a generation ago.

Certain chairs of the period, bearing the general characteristics of Hepplewhite design, when ornamented with the wheatear or rippling leaf of the great water-reed, are often ascribed to Thomas Shearer. That is as it may be, but the "London Book of Prices" does not contain a chair of any sort or description. It would be rash to argue from this fact that Shearer did not make chairs. He would scarcely have left all the chair-making to his contemporaries.

The reader may ask the *raison d'être* of this collaboration on the part of Shearer and others.

The "Cabinet Maker's London Book of Prices" gives no actual description of any of the articles illustrated, but contains some hundred or so complete estimates of piece-work wages for making various articles of furniture. These estimates are worked out in a manner which must have been very helpful to the trade. It must be remembered that the book was not

compiled for the benefit of the retail buyer, but simply as a guide to the master cabinet-maker in the production of furniture then in fashion.

Briefly the method employed is to give the price of making the article in its simplest form, and then addenda consisting of a long list of extras. For example:

"A Corner Bason Stand.

"The ends one foot three inches from front to front, one real and two sham drawers, with course round ditto, two holes for cups, the top rail scalloped, or to sham a drawer, veneered front, 13*s.* 0*d.*

"Extras:

"Each inch more or less, 3*d.*

"Each extra sham drawer, 4*d.*

"Cock-beading the drawer, or sham ditto, extra from string, 1½*d.*

"Making the wash-boards to fold down, 1*s.* 6*d.*

"An extra cup-hole, 1½*d.*

"Cutting out the bason hole, 4*d.*

"If enclosed between the bottom rails with two doors in front, and one ditto with sham on each side, 8*s.*

"If ditto is made with reed doors in front, 5*s.* 6*d.*

"Oiling and polishing, 6*d.*"

We may thus get an approximate estimate of the original prime cost of the workmanship in the little corner washstand as illustrated in Fig. 74 of this volume; say 14*s*. It may interest the reader to know that it was bought for 12*s*. 6*d*. (less than the original cost of the labour) at a country furniture-broker's shop about seven years ago. It had during recent years been covered with hedge-sparrow blue enamel paint. That removed, it stands in almost original freshness.

Amongst the smaller articles we find estimates for making Dumb Waiters, 4*s*.; Plate Carriers, 13*s*.; Knife Trays, 2*s*. 6*d*.; Table Desks, 2*s*. 6*d*. or 4*s*. 6*d*. fitted; Dispensary Cases from 13*s*. to 27*s*. 6*d*. To all these must be added small lists of extras.

Screen Dressing-Glass Frame. "The inside of the glass two feet six inches long, one foot six inches wide, the back fram'd with four flat panels, the weights cast by the plumber, claws, and common castors, £1 1*s*. 0*d*. If made to swing, and not to rise, 6*s*. less."

Shaving Stands, £1 1*s*.; ditto with canted corners, £1 7*s*.; ditto with hollow corners, £1 11*s*.; ditto, half round, £2 5*s*.

Various bedsteads, such as "Press," "Table," "Toilet Table," "Bureau," and "Library Press,"

are estimated at from 18*s.* to £3 18*s.* The book unfortunately does not illustrate these articles of deception. It would be interesting to see Shearer's idea of a "Toilet Table Bedstead." It is difficult to understand the desire for a piece of furniture to serve as a bed by night and to look like a toilet-table by day! A bookcase bedstead would be comprehendable in a bachelor's apartment.

Knee-Hole Writing-Table, £2 8*s.*; Serpentine Knee-Hole Writing-Table, £3 15*s.*; Kidney Library Writing-Table, £1 1*s.*; Knee-Hole ditto, £5 2*s.*; Gentleman's Writing-Table, £8. These tables are subject to many extras.

Circular Cellaret Sideboard, £2 16*s.*

Cellaret Sideboard, with elliptic middle and elliptic hollow on each side, £3.

Side-Tables from about £1 10*s.*

A "Horse-shoe Dining Table: 7 feet long, 2 feet 6 inches wide, veneered rail, the flaps supported either way, plain taper legs, and an astragal round the bottom of the rail, £2 5*s.*; oiling and polishing, 2*s.*"

The lady's screen writing-table, referred to on p. 50, 1 ft. 6 in. long, 1 ft. 4 in. wide, framing 4 in. deep, is priced at 12*s.* 6*d.*; but 12*s.* 6*d.* allows for one drawer only; and we must add 2*s.* 3*d.* for each of the eight extra drawers (as

shown in the picture), and about 6*s.* for other small extra items, in all £1 16*s.* 6*d.*

It must be borne in mind that the cost of material must be added to all the above figures.

The foregoing list is not an exhaustive one of the furniture made by Shearer and his contemporaries, but will give some idea of the vast strides made in the direction of diversity of household appointments between the first and last quarters of the eighteenth century.

Shearer's book is very delightful but very illusive, inasmuch as it certainly illustrates the work of more than one master-craftsman, as evidenced by the various signatures, and it is practically impossible to assign any particular piece to its original source.

Shearer does not in any sense ride the high horse. He gives us nothing in the shape of bombast, so prevalent in the design books of the period, in the direction of dissertations on architecture in general and the "Five Orders of Columns" in particular.

He and the other makers whose goods are engraved in the "Book of Prices" were apparently plain, straightforward tradesmen, who made honest furniture for honest citizens. Everything illustrated is remarkable for grace of outline and freedom from over-ornamentation; and we cannot

point to a single article which would outrage modern taste.

Very little mention is made by Shearer of the woods employed in the construction of these various articles of furniture. Existing specimens generally consist of mahogany, either in the solid or stoutish veneers made up on oak or pine with narrow inlays of satinwood. Inlays of kingwood and tulip-wood are mentioned in the "Book of Prices." A beautiful effect is sometimes obtained by the juxtaposition of two veneers of mahogany of varying shades emphasised by narrow dividing lines or stringings of some very light-coloured wood.

Before leaving the subject it may interest the reader to find the following amongst Shearer's list of "Extras":

"Colouring and polishing drawer bottoms, each 2*d*." The drawer bottoms were often of pine or straight-grained oak and would be coloured to match the mahogany sides.

"Lining drawer bottoms with blue paper, 1½*d*." These blue papers are still sometimes found on old specimens.

"Polishing the outside of any work with hard wax to be double the price of oil polishing; ditto with turpentine and wax to be half the extra price from oil polishing."

It will be noted in the illustration (Fig. 34) that four different designs are given for sash tracery. The "price of tracery from square sash" is given as No. 1, £2 13*s.* 4*d.*; No. 2, £1 9*s.*; No. 3, £1 14*s.* 6*d.*; and No. 4, £2 2*s.* 6*d.* The cost of the work in this writing-desk in simplest form is put down at £5 15*s.*, but with tracery in the doors, and a long list of small extras (occupying three pages in the price-book), from 1*d.* to 4*s.* per item, it might well run into £10.

The "Book of Prices" gives an estimate for making a lobby chest, but unfortunately there is no engraving to correspond; neither is there one for a table-bedstead, "the front made to represent a Lobby Chest."

There are many things in which the "London Book of Prices" does not help us; but one thing it does indisputably do, that is, shows us quite plainly what furniture was being made and sold in and about the years 1788 and 1793.

CHAPTER VI: ADAM AND THE CLASSICAL INFLUENCE

"THERE is something essentially cosmopolitan about the name of Adam." English furniture as expressed by the two illustrious Scotchmen, Robert and James Adam, is cosmopolitan, inasmuch as it consists of a varied assortment of Italian, French, and other Continental influences grafted on to English stock.

We have seen how the early Chippendale School developed on Queen Anne lines, and then how Ince and Mayhew and Robert Manwaring adapted, wholesale, Chippendale's ideals, whilst Shearer and Hepplewhite modified them and added distinctive touches of their own. All the latter part of this period there was one man influencing the others to a very marked extent; and he, forsooth, was not a cabinet-maker but an architect of repute. So far as James Adam is concerned, he may as well be left out of the furniture question as, apparently, his brother Robert was the guiding spirit in this second Renaissance movement.

Few people are aware of how much London owes to the Adam influence. The name is perpetuated in Adam Street, Adelphi, a quiet

thoroughfare running from the Strand, just by the Hotel Cecil, towards the Thames. Two of the adjoining streets still bear names of members of the Adam brotherhood, viz. Robert and John; whilst James and William Streets have been linked up and rechristened Durham House Street.

A recent conversation with a constable on the Adelphi beat elicited the information that the streets were originally planned by George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, who, in christening them, included the names of himself, George, and his three sons, John, Robert, and Adam! It was just a case of slightly muddled history. The Buckingham estate is contiguous to the Adelphi, and the Duke, evidently desirous of perpetuating his names and titles, named the thoroughfares on his property George Court, Villiers Street, Duke Street, Of Alley, and Buckingham Street. "Of Alley" was a masterly touch, but of all the quintette it is the only one we cannot find to-day. It most likely exists under the name of York Place, the only alley thereabouts. Possibly the Brothers Adam, in naming the Adelphi streets, took their cue from their ducal neighbour.

Mr. John Swarbrick, A.R.I.B.A., who published in 1903 a monograph on the "Life, Work,

and Influence of Robert Adam and his Brother," tells us that Robert and James were the sons of William Adam of Maryburgh, near Kinross, who was probably the leading architect of his day in Scotland. Robert was born at Kirkcaldy, Fifeshire, in 1728. He died at 13 Albemarle Street, London, on 13th March 1792 (a fortnight before the decease of Sir Joshua Reynolds), and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

It would not serve any useful purpose here to enter into any lengthy discussion as to the merits or demerits of Adam architecture as expressed in the numerous family mansions, churches, and other buildings in London and the provinces. Many of these houses remain practically intact to-day. To those whom the subject interests we suggest they should examine the three superb folio volumes illustrating the architect's works. Copies can be seen at the Guildhall, Soane Museum, Victoria and Albert, and British Museum Libraries. Volumes 1 and 2 were issued in parts between 1773 and 1778. A third posthumous volume was added by the publishers in 1822 when the whole work was reissued. The 106 plates are by Bartolozzi, Piranesi, Zucchi, Pastorini, Cunego, &c., and consist mainly of elevations and details of such notable buildings as Shelburne House in Berkeley Square, Sir Watkin Williams Wynne's

house, No. 20 St. James's Square (now in the occupation of the Earl of Strathmore and Kinghorne), the old Drury Lane Theatre façade (since demolished), and, perhaps more familiar to the reader, the Adelphi Terrace, between the Strand and the River Thames. The terrace stands, structurally, much as it did when it left the builder's hands. Cumberland, the dramatist, mentioned it as :

"*That fraternal pile on Thames' bank*
Which draws its title, not its taste, from Greece."

As a matter of fact the name Adelphi was intended as a classic rendering of the architects' surname. The Brothers Adam took over a network of riverside slums, and on the site erected a classic suburb. The terrace was raised upon high arches, and, fronting the river, must have commanded one of the most interesting prospects in London. The Victoria Embankment (constructed in 1864–7) and the London County Council Gardens, which now intervene, have considerably altered the prospect, perhaps for the better. Robert Adam's original design shows the river and shipping close up to the terrace. A staircase at each end of the terrace gives access to the gloomy Adelphi arches.

David Garrick lived at No. 5 Adelphi Terrace

from 1772 till his death in 1779. The ceiling of his front drawing-room was painted by Antonio Zucchi, and it is said that a chimney-piece of white marble in the same room cost £300 (*see* Fig. 37).

Boswell, in his "Life of Johnson," says: "He [Johnson] and I walked away together; we stopped a little while by the rails of the Adelphi, looking on the Thames, and I said to him with some emotion, that I was now thinking of two friends we had lost, who once lived in the buildings behind us: Beauclerk and Garrick. 'Ay, sir,' said he tenderly, 'and two such friends as cannot be supplied.'"

To those who know their London, other houses designed by Adam will be familiar; such as Lansdowne House, Berkeley Square, houses in Mansfield Street, Cavendish Square, the lower end of Portland Place, a considerable portion of Fitzroy Square, and a fine stone-fronted house in Queen Anne Street.

The three volumes of engravings (issued in complete form in 1822) referred to above contain very little which actually illustrates the Adam furniture. One plate, dated 1771, illustrates a Sedan chair "as executed for Her Majesty." This would, of course, mean Queen Charlotte, consort of George III. There is also an organ-case, some pier-glasses, lock-plates and other

door furniture, and a fine side-table made for Shelburne House.

In addition to the published works the student may do well to carefully examine the original Adam drawings contained in twenty-six folio volumes at the Soane Museum, Lincoln's Inn Fields. These original sketches were purchased at auction by Sir John Soane for £800.

Amongst these twenty-six volumes one is devoted to furniture and other household appointments, such as carpets, bed coverings, &c. The drawings (many coloured) are signed by Robert Adam, and mostly dated. We find a magnificent sofa designed for Lord Scarsdale, and also "executed for Mrs. Montagu in Hill Street." It has cabriole legs with masks and the ends supported by nude figures terminating in scaly tails. This sketch is dated 1762, and is apparently the earliest of the series. A simple sofa, without back, has scrolled end-pieces and straight legs. It is decorated with flutings, pateræ, palm leaves, and honeysuckle. There is an elaborate sofa in the French style, dated 1764, designed for Sir Lawrence Dundas, Bart. A gilt suite for Sir Abraham Hume (dated 1779–80), consists of large and small sofas, a confidante, and an arm-chair. These have very light frames on straight turned legs. An arm-chair for the Etruscan Dressing-

Room at Osterly has a square back with rounded corners and vase splat. Each massive arm consists of a fierce-looking animal with a lion's body and an eagle's head and wings—the gryphon of mythology.

Hall chairs show circular backs, some with straight legs and others with X-shaped supports. The Greek honeysuckle (anthemion) decoration prevails on these chairs. Fire-grates, dated 1765 to 1779, are mostly very elaborate. A comparatively simple one, designed for the eating-room of Cumberland House, has a lion and a unicorn sitting on either hob. Two wine-cisterns are in the form of sarcophagi, one appropriately decorated with a panel of grapes and the other with Cupids. Both have ring handles suspended from lion-head plates, and one has lion-paw supports.

A series of Dome beds include designs made for the Earl of Coventry, the Hon. H. F. Thynne, and "Their Majesties."

In the collection of sketches there is an entire absence of anything in the nature of simple furniture.

The Soane Museum, although so intimately associated with Adam in its library, boasts but one piece of Adam furniture—a charming window-seat with scrolled ends and straight legs. It is

almost identical with an illustration in the Hepplewhite design book (*see* Fig. 6). This was probably made by Hepplewhite from Robert Adam's design, and afterwards included in the Hepplewhite "Guide."

It is quite certain that much of the furniture made by Chippendale and Hepplewhite was designed by Robert Adam, and it is quite possible that Sheraton executed furniture from Adam designs. It is known that the furniture for Harewood House, Yorkshire, was designed by Adam and made by Chippendale. The existing bills prove it to have been a very costly arrangement.

As we become more careful in nomenclature we shall designate such joint productions as "Adam-Chippendale," "Adam-Hepplewhite," and so forth. It should not be a difficult matter, when we have once grasped the spirit of the Adam architecture, to recognise the furniture and fitments designed to adorn the interiors of the Adam houses.

Robert Adam made a journey to France in 1754, and his studies there palpably influenced his conceptions of furniture, and more particularly those examples we find in his sketches at the Soane Museum. Further studies were made in Western Italy and Rome in 1754 and 1755. In

1757 he started for Spalatro in company with Charles Louis Clérisseau, a French architect, for the purpose of studying the remains of the ancient palace of the Emperor Diocletian. This building was erected A.D. 305, and although but the villa residence of the emperor it originally covered an area of nine and a half acres.

Mr. G. M. Ellwood, in the Introduction to his work on "English Furniture and Decoration, 1680–1800," says: "Adam saw the possibility of adapting the style to English homes and fortunately possessed the power to improve in the process, evolving the daintiest style of decoration that has ever existed. . . . Adam undoubtedly helped to build his great reputation by the great contemporaries he employed. Pergolesi, Cipriani, Zucchi, and Columbani as designers and painters and Angelica Kauffmann, a painter of exquisite decorative figure subjects, contributed quantities of original work that went to his credit."

It must not be supposed that the many centuries-old ruins at Spalatro yielded any examples of furniture for Adam to copy; but the architectural features of the remains of the buildings supplied motifs for the imaginative architect to work upon, and the natural result was a style of furniture suitable for his buildings.

The Adam influence upon household furniture commenced soon after Robert's return from Italy about 1758. He was appointed architect to the King and his career was thenceforward one of unbroken success. The four Georges were anything but ideal patrons of the fine arts, but in this case the Royal favour seems to have worked wonders and the Adam taste reigned supreme for a considerable time. Adam, it will be seen, was not an originator; but adapting ancient Italian motifs to modern requirements the British public readily accepted his ideas, which, although not new, came as revelations. He not only designed fine houses, but also the interior decorations—fitments, furniture, and even the carpets.

Scarcely a tithe of the furniture in the Adam style could have been designed by him. The fashion took such hold upon the public mind that practically every cabinet-maker of the day was making something in the mode.

The Adam style in furniture, as set by Adam, apart from his French styles, was purely Italian in feeling, and, in the main, very restrained and formal; but at the hands of his many imitators its very formality was its downfall. It soon degenerated into an absolutely false and unmeaning classicalism, scarcely better than the bad

Empire and Trafalgar creations of the succeeding period.

To get into the real Adam atmosphere the reader should make a journey to the Adelphi region. This may be approaching it somewhat from the popular side; but after all the ideas he will imbibe there will come more within the scope of this volume than anything he will see at the great houses in Berkeley and St. James's Squares. The great houses he can examine at his leisure as opportunity affords.

The first thing that arrests attention in a stroll down Adam Street is the Adelphi Hotel at the corner of John Street. The ground floor has been painted in a way which might make Robert and James Adam uneasy in their graves; but the old architectural features are there beneath the modern paint. Running right up the front of the house from the first-floor level are pilasters worked with Robert Adam's favourite ornament, the Grecian anthemion (honeysuckle), and over the ground floor is a band of flutings and pateræ. Just across the way at 7 Adam Street we find the same architectural designs. These two houses still retain the old iron balconies—scarcely balconies, they are little more than tall shallow flower-guards. Continuing down Adam Street towards the river we find a series of fine old

spacious doorways, generally with a narrow slit window on either side, surmounted by semi-circular lights filled with fan tracery of various patterns, some lobed and others straight-rayed.

Adam Street and Robert Street each end in the Adelphi Terrace, one at the eastern and the other at the western extremity. The terrace, although dwarfed by the towering Hotel Cecil, is still imposing, and the view across the gardens and the Embankment to the "silent highway," with Waterloo Bridge on the one hand and the towers of Westminster on the other, is one of the finest anywhere in the heart of London. The house fronts of the terrace are not quite as the Adam Brothers left them. About 1870 it was found that the Adelphi arches and houses required underpinning. This being successfully accomplished, the architect thought good to cover up the old brickwork with stucco. A glance at the two end houses of Adam and Robert Streets will reveal the original appearance of the Terrace. The small iron balconies have been replaced with stucco balustrades. But running right up from the balcony level are the original pilasters ornamented with strings of the Grecian honeysuckle, commencing with an inverted bunch of acanthus leaves. These pilasters are moulded in Robert Adam's own stucco, which must have been of wonderful

composition, seeing that it has stood the test of a century and a half of London smoke, whilst so many stone carvings in the city have crumbled away to dust.

Of course the visitor will note the disc on the front of No. 5 in the Terrace, denoting that David Garrick lived there. By kind permission of the occupants, through the good offices of Mr. A. B. Hayward, of the Adelphi, we have been able to photograph the fine mantelpiece in the Garrick drawing-room on the first floor, now the library of the Institution of Naval Architects. The original Adam fire-grate has long since disappeared,* but the reader will judge for himself of the beauty of the delicately worked Carrara marble mantelpiece (*see* Fig. 37). The room which contains this gem of eighteenth-century art is some 14 ft. high, with finely moulded ceiling, in which are discs and lunettes painted by Antonio Zucchi. All the mouldings to the woodwork in the room are carved with characteristic Adam designs. The balusters of the stair rail are of solid brass finely moulded, but are now painted to avoid the necessity of constant polishing.

Fig. 38 represents the marble mantelpiece

* Two very fine Adam fire-grates may be seen in the Ironwork Section at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

in the drawing-room at No. 10 Adelphi Terrace. The ceiling of this room is painted in the style of, if not actually by, Angelica Kauffmann. The Terrace teems with historical associations of the eighteenth century. It is said that at one house in the Terrace the beautiful girl who was afterwards Lady Hamilton occupied a menial position in the household of a physician.

Fig. 39 illustrates the fine Adam doorway of No. 2 Adam Street, a house which, outwardly at least, retains all its old characteristics. The side-posts are worked with bands of guilloche work enclosing the ubiquitous honeysuckle, and over the door is a semicircular light with straight-rayed tracery, whilst on either side is a pierced metal grille.

Close by at No. 13 John Street (*see* Fig. 40) is another fine old doorway with the narrow slit windows on either side. The original lamp standards and the extinguisher recall memories of the linkmen with their torches to light folk home through the murk of the "London particular" on November nights. Opposite, at 16A John Street (the entrance is round the corner in Durham House Street), is a house which lays claim to being the birthplace of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, although opinions differ on the point and perhaps a house near the

Gray's Inn Road has a better claim to the distinction. At any rate the elder Disraeli once lived at 16A John Street.

In many old houses, and alas! in modern ones too, the architect has been content to put, so to speak, all his goods in the front window. Having beautified the exterior he has left it at that. But not so with the Brothers Adam; and we have but to take a glance at an Adelphi Terrace reception-room, with its marble mantelpiece and Ionic columns, to see, in the mind's eye, the Adam sideboards and cabinets gracing the arched recesses.

To come to the furniture suited to, if not actually designed for, the Adam houses, we have in Fig. 41 a carved and gilt side-table with bow front on four legs, which are decorated with strings of bell-flower. The top is of mahogany. Round the frieze we find the same fluting as on the fronts of the Adam houses. This and the next illustration are from photographs lent by Mr. C. J. Charles.

Fig. 42 is another side-table of carved mahogany, standing on six legs, with a brass rail at back from which silk or moreen curtains would be suspended to protect the wall from contact with the Sheffield plate or silver service. The frieze is decorated with flutings, pateræ, and vase,

with looped draperies, all of which will be found as details in the houses. The tapering legs are grooved in Corinthian style.

Fig. 43 is a simple but dignified example in the possession of Mr. J. H. Springett, of Rochester, who values it at £30. It is built of fine mahogany and the drawers are lined with oak. The square tapering legs are panelled on their facets, and have characteristic Corinthian capitals.

Fig. 44 is a carved and gilt Adam settee, with shaped back and arms on four carved and fluted legs. It is upholstered in a green silk tabouret. This seat measures 4 ft. 9 in. in length. The owner, Mr. F. W. Phillips, places the date at about 1775.

Fig. 45, a very long settee on eight legs, has the characteristic Adam fluting on the front rail of the seat frame.

Mr. Clouston, in his book on eighteenth-century furniture, gives us a masterly and complete analysis of the Adams and their influence. He tells us, in effect, that Robert and James Adam were architects first, and in the second place were forced into designing furniture to fit in with their architectural schemes. It was not from any knowledge of or love for furniture, as furniture, that led Robert Adam to design it; but having tried existing models and found

them wanting there was nothing left for him but to suggest the suitable forms of (as well as the decorations on) the furniture to accord with the architectural features of his interiors.

The foregoing paragraph contains but a bald summary of the case as put by Mr. Clouston into four chapters of his book.

The original Adam designs at the Soane Museum contain but few examples of chairs, and the few that are shown are not of a simple nature. From lack of evidence to the contrary one is led to think that Adam did not actually design many chairs, either simple or elaborate. We frequently find sideboards, settees, cabinets, and bookcases, catalogued for sale or offered by dealers, and such we accept indisputably as Adam. It is only at rare intervals that anything in the nature of the few fine chairs after Robert Adam's designs preserved at the Soane Museum, come into the market. Sometimes we see a simple chair catalogued as Adam, but almost invariably the question arises, is it really Adam? There may be some salient point in the decoration to lend colour to the ascription, but how often do we find a chair which both in build and decoration throughout puts itself outside the doubt? In the chapter on the later Sheraton and Empire periods we shall give some examples of

chairs with Adam features. It is unwise to dogmatise when we find pieces of furniture—and more particularly chairs—which might be styled Hepplewhite, Sheraton, or Adam at the sweet wills of the happy possessors.

Mr. Ellwood tells us "Adam was not successful in designing chairs, for though he introduced new shapes, they were not perfect in proportion or line, and it remained for Sheraton and Hepplewhite to correct their defects and develop a number of beautiful designs from them." A moment's thought will soon convince us of the reasonableness of this. Every man—even a Robert Adam—has his limitations. The present writer imagines that very few architects could design a chair of perfect form structurally as well as from the purely decorative point of view; whilst an architect of quite modest attainments might design a sideboard or even a cabinet which lends itself readily to architectural treatment. Adam was a consummate architect, and his sideboards were consummate creations.

CHAPTER VII: SHERATON—THE MAN AND HIS AIMS

The foregoing chapters must be taken as introductory to the subject of Sheraton. The usual procedure in text-books of this nature is to divide the subject-matter into two sections—"mahogany" and "satinwood," or perhaps "Chippendale" and "Sheraton." We have endeavoured, so far as space admits, to enlarge upon the subject and give some little prominence to the other men who were making history in the furniture world. To fully appreciate Chippendale it is necessary to give some thought to the designers who were working directly and indirectly under his influence, such men as Manwaring, Ince, and Mayhew. In like manner we cannot get a thorough grasp of the Sheraton spirit till we know something of Shearer and Hepplewhite, and perhaps a little more of Adam.

As in the preceding chapters, we shall first of all go to the fountain-head for inspiration.

"The Cabinet Maker and Upholsterer's Drawing Book, by Thomas Sheraton, Cabinet Maker," 1793, was printed for the author by T. Bensley, and sold by various London booksellers and the author at 41 Davies Street, Grosvenor Square.

The appendix to the book gives the author's address as 106 Wardour Street, which goes to prove that he moved there about 1794. Later on he appears to have moved again to 8 Broad Street, Golden Square. Possibly at some date these houses may all bear the inscribed tablets which are becoming so familiar on London house fronts, and he who runs may read "Here Sheraton lived and worked."

To come to the contents of the book. It consists of 446 pp. of text with 68 engravings, issued in three parts, 1791–1794, with an appendix of 54 pp. and 33 engravings, dated 1793, and a compendium of 27 pp. and 14 engravings. The engravings bear various dates from 1791 to 1794. A revised edition with 122 engravings was issued in 1802. The frontispiece, drawn by Sheraton and engraved by Hawkins, shows us a classical apartment in which are seated and standing certain professors and an attendant Cupid; there is a classic temple in the distance. The legend attached to the plate reads: "Time alters fashions and frequently obliterates works of art and ingenuity; but that which is founded on geometry and real science will remain unalterable."

Chippendale started this scientific pose; the smaller men followed suit, and Sheraton put the capping-stone on it, but with this difference:

whilst we are never in doubt as to the posing of Manwaring we are in some danger of being taken in by Sheraton with his air of absolute sincerity. That he thoroughly believed in himself there can be little doubt.

Sheraton explains his allegorical frontispiece and we learn that Geometry, standing on a rock, is talking to Perspective, "who is attentive to the principles of Geometry as the ground of his art; which art is represented by the frame on which he rests his hand." Then we have figures of Drawing and Architecture, the latter measuring the shaft of a Tuscan column. We have not at present discovered anything of the Tuscan order in Sheraton furniture; and Sheraton does not explain the presence of Dan Cupid. He tells us that "on the back ground is the Temple of Fame, to which a knowledge of these arts directly leads."

The copies of Sheraton's "Drawing Book" were mainly bought by members of the trade for whose edification and instruction they were primarily intended, whereas Chippendale's "Director" was intended rather as a guide to taste for the wealthy purchasers of furniture. The furniture buyers would have no desire to wade through pages on pages of more or less abstruse dissertations on perspective and

geometry, which might, on the other hand, do good service in the making of good cabinet-makers out of the rough material of the eighteenth-century London apprentice.

Thomas Sheraton, the man who produced this grandiloquent work in 1791–1794, was born of humble parentage at Stockton-on-Tees, about 1750 or 1751. He appears to have had but little education, and in his youth devoted much time to the writing of tracts and preaching in Baptist chapels. Tracts by him are dated 1792 and 1794. The curious reader can find them in the British Museum Library. Even in his furniture books he drops into Bible History and discourses on Jabal, the city which Enoch built, the Tower of Babel, and Solomon's Temple, and interlards his text with religious phrases. We thus find that Sheraton was issuing tracts and furniture books in the same year, and to some extent bound up in the same covers.

A link with the history of Sheraton has only of recent years passed away in the person of Adam Black. We read in the Memoirs of the great publisher, edited by Alexander Nicholson, LL.D., that in 1804 Adam Black, then a struggling young man of twenty, visited Sheraton. "He (Black) was willing to do any honest work by which he could make a living, and inquired in all

directions, but in vain. At last he heard of a man called Sheraton, publishing a book called the 'Cabinet Maker's Encyclopædia,' who might give him something to do. He called on him, and found the worthy encyclopædist and his surroundings to be painfully humble; but as he wanted an assistant Adam Black agreed to help him in whatever way he could, either in writing articles or in a less intellectual capacity. Here is his description of the man and his place.

"'I was with him for about a week, engaged in most wretched work, writing a few articles and trying to put his shop in order, working amongst dirt and bugs, for which I was remunerated with half a guinea. Miserable as the pay was I was half ashamed to take it from the poor man.' In his diary, addressed to his parents, he said further: 'He is a man of talent and I believe of genuine piety. He understands the cabinet business—I believe was bred to it; he has been and perhaps at present is, a preacher; he is a scholar, writes well; draws in my opinion, masterly; is an author, bookseller, stationer, and teacher. We may be ready to ask how comes it to pass that a man with such abilities and resources is in such a state? I believe his abilities are his ruin, for attempting to do everything he does nothing.'"

The editor of Black's Memoirs says: "The future publisher of the 'Encyclopædia Britannica' and friend of Jeffrey and Macaulay, working with this good threadbare man amongst dirt and bugs, and taking half a guinea for his trouble with some compunction is an instructive spectacle."

Adam Black describes the street as an obscure one, and says "the house was half shop, half dwelling-house, and that he looked himself like a worn-out Methodist minister with threadbare black coat."

These unpleasant details dispose of the popular fallacy that Sheraton was the prosperous proprietor of a huge London factory turning out thousands of pieces of fine furniture for the adornment of the houses of wealthy patrons and the delight of future generations.

The pity of it all is not that Sheraton has been placed upon a pedestal, but that he has been placed upon the wrong one. He was a self-taught genius with a taste for geometry and drawing. Whether or no he was a prolific maker of furniture we see that he was a prolific writer upon the subject, with a finer grasp of it than possessed by any other man of his day. We must look upon him rather as the Boswell than the Johnson of furniture.

As a journeyman cabinet-maker he came from Stockton-on-Tees probably between 1770 and 1775. There is apparently no positive evidence forthcoming, and opinions differ considerably as to the exact year; but we can well believe that twenty years would scarcely be too long a period during which the journeyman of twenty-one or thereabouts could blossom into the master cabinet-maker with sufficient experience to launch his "Drawing Book." To compile such a work, embracing, as it does, the ideas of at any rate the majority of his contemporary tradesmen, would necessitate the experience of many years and the labour of some few more.

To sum up the situation: Sheraton was a born teacher possessed of a burning desire to publish his ideas for the advancement of his fellow-craftsmen and the enrichment of himself. That the monetary results fell far short of his expectations, and even deserts, we can well believe, when we read his obituary notice by "Sylvanus Urban" in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for November 1806. The notice stated that Sheraton had formerly been a *journeyman* cabinet-maker, but left his wife and two children, it was feared, in distressed circumstances, having supported them by authorship since 1793, and that he died at Broad Street, Soho, of a phrenitis,

after a few days' illness, at the age of fifty-five. By this it would appear that if even at the time of the publication of the "Drawing Book" he was a master cabinet-maker it is scarcely safe to ascribe to his hand any furniture made after 1793.

Assuming that he was apprenticed at the age of fourteen (about 1765) and came to London at the expiration of his "seven long years" (say 1772), he worked but twenty-one years as an actual maker. It goes without saying that next to Chippendale he left more impress on English furniture than did any other individual man of his own or any other time. Not only did he leave his mark on furniture, but his name has ever since been more closely connected with a recognised style, or rather a number of styles, than any other man since Chippendale. And this, perhaps, somewhat unjustly. Sheraton's name has lived and will live more by what he put in his "Drawing Book" than by what he did as an individual furniture-maker and designer. His "Encyclopædia," published in 1804–1807, was bad enough to ruin his or any reputation, but of that more later on. The "Drawing Book" contains much that was his own original work, but much more that was cleverly picked from the brains of others. Sheraton has been described

by various writers as arrogant, self-assertive, taking the best of other men without acknowledging the inspiration, and sometimes even going so far as to vilify the source of inspiration. One writer stigmatises him as the Ishmael of the furniture industry. He eagerly seized everything going on round about him, and in his efforts to enrich himself conferred a priceless boon upon the furniture trade at large.

At the risk of being accused of quibbling we suggest that before the publication of the "Drawing Book" there was no such thing as a Sheraton School of furniture. There was, in London at any rate, an English style being naturally evolved from an older one influenced by contemporary French ideas and ideals. Sheraton collated all this and set his name to it, and there it has been and probably will remain for all time. Much as we may quarrel with the term, it is difficult to find a handier name than the "Sheraton School," even if Sheraton was not the schoolmaster.

The very apparent outcome of Sheraton's literary effort, the "Drawing Book," was a marked improvement in provincial furniture-making. By the aid of such a useful volume the provincial maker was in a position to compete

with the Metropolis ; and many a country maker who for years had been content to go on making heavy furniture more or less on the old Chippendale lines, seized the opportunity of coming into line with the prevailing London modes. We have but to look at the list of subscribers to find the names of cabinet-makers in all parts of the country.* The "Encyclopædia" of 1804 should have had a similar vogue for we learn in the obituary notice that Sheraton had obtained nearly a thousand subscribers for his work, which only reached thirty numbers out of the promised 125. "In order to increase the number of subscribers he had lately travelled to Ireland, where he obtained the sanction of the Lord-Lieutenant, the Marchioness of Donegal, and other distinguished persons."

The writer has recently seen in a Devon farmhouse a sideboard of the period made up of old faded mahogany on oak and pine. It was decorated with oval panels outlined with narrow strings of ebony and holly. The legs were square and tapering, but very massive as compared with any accepted Metropolitan model. The ends were concave and receding. The

* To his "Dictionary" Sheraton appends a list of about 250 cabinet-makers in or near London.

three drawers had never been pierced for handles, being pulled out by grasping the under edges. Such a piece was probably made either at Exeter, Tiverton, or Taunton, its present abiding-place being somewhere midway between the three towns.

CHAPTER VIII: SHERATON AND THE "DRAWING BOOK"

Some writers have placed Thomas Sheraton on a very high pedestal. Without making invidious distinctions we are inclined to think that, in spite of its iconoclastic tendency, Mr. R. S. Clouston's appreciation of Sheraton comes nearer the mark. We use the word appreciation in the sense of a just estimate. At the same time, with all deference, we are inclined to think Mr. Clouston under-estimates the man's ability and integrity. Without going into the question of the three or four hundred pages of perspective, which, after all, concern the furniture-collector but little, if we read through the "Drawing Book" we shall soon arrive at the conclusion that Sheraton had no intention of passing off all the designs as his own. Sheraton was no fool, and if, like the Heathen Chinee, he did "the same with intent to deceive," it was the clumsiest of clumsy attempts. What we can all deplore is that when he palpably borrowed a design from another man he rarely had the grace to acknowledge the actual source of inspiration. On the few occasions when he did so it looked very much like advertising the other men—so many copies

of the book for so much advertisement. For instance, we read: "This design [library steps] was taken from steps that have been made by Mr. Campbell, upholsterer to the Prince of Wales. They were first made for the King and highly approved of by him. . . . There are other kinds of Library Steps which I have seen, made by other persons, but in my opinion these must have a decided preference both as to simplicity and firmness when they are set up."

This may be the attitude of a man with ulterior motives, but not that of a dishonest one.

If in future we come across steps of the particular pattern we shall have to call them "Campbell" steps. Those made by "the other persons," for want of a better distinction, will still have to be "Sheraton."

Of a cabinet in the Appendix he writes: "This cabinet, I presume, is as new as the fire-screen, and will have a better effect in the execution than in the design." The "I presume" discounts any idea of attempt on the part of Sheraton to pass it off as his own. At the same time, knowing, as he probably did, the name of the designer, it looks like a breach of the unwritten law of copyright. The same may be said of his illustration of a library table (Plate xxx). "It has already been executed for the Duke of York, excepting

the desk drawers, which are here added as an improvement."

It appears that Sheraton had a friend at Court, for he tells us, of the "Summer Bed in two compartments": "The first idea was communicated to me by Mr. Thompson, groom of household furniture to the Duke of York, which, I presume, is now improved, as it appears, in this design." Here the man's sublime egotism comes out. He had apparently not seen the original and yet claims to have improved upon it. The reader may judge of Sheraton's edition of the "Summer Bed" in Fig. 46.

In another place he writes: "To assist me in what I have here shown I had the opportunity of seeing the Prince of Wales's, the Duke of York's, and other noblemen's drawing-rooms. I have not, however, followed any one in particular, but have furnished my ideas from the whole, with such particulars as I thought best suited to give a display of the present taste in fitting up such rooms." The phrase "present taste" is very significant. Taking Sheraton at his own valuation, his mission was to display the taste of his time—right up to date. He blamed the Hepplewhite firm for being behind the times in their "Guide." He does not suggest they were at fault in not copying his (Sheraton's) designs,

but says, in effect, here is a fine new style in furniture rapidly spreading over the country, and here is Hepplewhite, who should be in a position to know what is going on, copying or adapting the antiquated ideas of Chippendale, Manwaring, and Ince and Mayhew.

This trimming of his sails to every wind that blew was in the end the downfall of Sheraton. We see it in his "Cabinet Maker and Upholsterer's Encyclopædia," which he commenced to issue in parts in 1804. So far as the "Encyclopædia" is concerned he might well have left it to more capable people. As a matter of fact he only lived to get as far as "Capstan" in the letter C, and one fails to find anything much nearer to furniture than "Achor—a valley of Jericho," or "Anselm—Archbishop of Canterbury."

The furniture designs attached to the "Encyclopædia" show that Sheraton was again trimming his sails to the real decadence in English furniture. In all charity we can only hope he was not the inventor of some of the atrocious designs for chairs ornamented with anchors, cables, tridents, dolphins, and other seafaring emblems, which marked the Trafalgar craze in furniture.

Previously, in 1803, Sheraton had published his "Cabinet Dictionary, containing an explanation of all the terms used in Cabinet, Chair,

and Upholstery Branches; with directions for varnish making, polishing, gilding," &c. &c., including his old friend the Five Orders of Architecture in Perspective. At the same time he hoped the subscribers would feel disposed to encourage the "new and splendid work now publishing," viz. his Encyclopædia.

The "Cabinet Dictionary" must have been a useful work in its own day, and it is full of interesting matter to the present-day collector who desires to dive beneath the surface of his Sheraton period acquisitions.

To return to the "Drawing Book." Of a plate (dated 1793) he writes: "This dining-parlour gives a general idea of the Prince of Wales's in Carlton House; but in some particulars it will be a little varied, as I had but a very transient view of it" (*see* Fig. 47). His little excursions up the back staircase seemingly did not take him higher than the dining-parlour. For the purposes of his book it was necessary to put in this hall-mark of Royalty, and posterity should be grateful for a peep at the Royal parlour, even if "slightly varied" by Sheraton. Had he been the Prince's furnisher he would, very readily and quite properly, have told us so.

We remember once seeing exposed, in a shop window, the ledger account for perfumes, soaps,

and cosmetics supplied to the Prince, and a tidy amount it totalled up. Perhaps some day the Carlton House furniture account may come to light.

Sheraton makes no attempt at claiming the "French State Bed." He writes: "Beds of this kind have been introduced of late with great success in England." Then he says: "Plates 25, 27, 28, and 29 require no explanation, they are therefore omitted." The first, second, and third of these consist of chair backs and traceries for cabinet doors which may or may not require explanation; but the other represents two long clock cases—the only ones in Sheraton's book—and they certainly do require some explanation. They are very much in the French style. The reader will find them reproduced in Fig. 48.

Apart from all this controversial matter we occasionally happen upon happy little touches from Sheraton's pen, *e.g.* of an "Elliptic Bed": "As fancifulness seems most peculiar to the taste of females, I have therefore assigned the use of this bed for a single lady, though it will equally accommodate a single gentleman. The elliptic shape of the frame of this bed contracts its width at each end considerably, on which account it will not admit of more than one person." Of sideboards he writes: "It is not usual to make

sideboards hollow in front, but in some circumstances it is evident that advantages will arrive from it. If the sideboard be required nine or ten feet long, as in some noblemen's houses, and if the breadth of it be in proportion to the length, it will not be easy for a butler to reach across it. I therefore think in this case a hollow front would obviate the difficulty, and at the same time have a very good effect, by taking off part of the appearance of the great length of such a sideboard, besides if the sideboard be near the entry door of the dining-room, the hollow front will sometimes secure the butler from the jostles of the other servants."

The collector who takes an interest in furniture construction will find some interesting items of information as to material and methods in the "Drawing Book." Of a table top he tells us: "The framing is three inches broad, and mitred at the corners: and the pannels are sometimes glued up in three thicknesses, the middle piece being laid with the grain across, and the other two lengthways of the pannel to prevent its warping." When a table is not framed, he tells us, "particular regard should be had to placing the heart side of the wood outward, which naturally draws round of itself, and may therefore be expected to keep true, notwith-

standing its unfavourable situation. N.B. The heart side of a board is easily known by planing the end, and observing the circular traces of the grain, which always tend outwards."

Fig. 49, reproduced from Plate xxxii of the "Drawing Book," represents Sheraton's idea of drawing-room chairs.

Fig. 50, from Plate xxxiii, shows two dining-parlour chairs.

Fig. 51, a series of six chair backs, exhibit the growing tendency to straight lines in the construction of chairs. One of these chair backs is indeed a shield based on a Hepplewhite idea, but even in this case we find the curved sides of the shield supporting a horizontal top instead of the Hepplewhite camel hump.

Fig. 52 represents three "Corner Bason Stands." The central one is of the ordinary type, containing the one real drawer and two sham drawer fronts. The design on the left shows a pleasing serpentine front with tambour shutter and a small cistern with tap. This, and the one on the right—which has a fold-down top—belong to the make-believe bedroom furniture of the period. Such washstands would go with the bureau-bedstead or press-bedstead in the bachelor's bed-sitting room.

The reader who has access to the original

design books of the period will do well to compare these Sheraton "Drawing Book" washstands with a similar group in Plate 19 of Shearer's "Book of Prices." He will find practically the same pattern in the open-fronted variety and also in the enclosed circular stand. In addition he will find a little square washstand with tambour front and swing glass. This goes a long way to show that they were in general use and it would be difficult to point to any one man as the inventor.

These little corner washstands are very plentiful to-day. The small size of the basins they are made to hold make them practically useless for modern requirements. Enterprising furniture-restorers fall back on converting them into cabinets, but the result is not satisfactory. Once a washstand always a washstand—at least in appearance.

CHAPTER IX: SHERATON PERIOD FURNITURE

A COMMON error amongst people who do not pretend to more than a passing knowledge of eighteenth-century furniture—and even amongst collectors whose habits should have engendered more discrimination—consists in the idea that there are sharp lines of demarcation between the various styles or schools. Furthermore, with the majority, just three or four names serve as handles. We shall hear that this chair is "Chippendale," this one is "Hepplewhite," this sideboard "Sheraton," and, perhaps, this other "Adam." Beyond that they do not, even if they are able, seem willing to go. Tell such a person that, in the Chippendale connection, such a chair is only of the "Chippendale School," and perhaps made by Manwaring, he will reply that he has never heard nor wishes to hear of such a man. In like manner Ince and Mayhew are sealed books. He will accept certain pieces of furniture as "Sheraton," but refuses to go through the necessary course of comparative anatomy to arrive at the conclusion that this piece was borrowed without acknowledgment from Shearer, and this other directly influenced

by Robert Adam, if not actually made on commission from an Adam design.

As recently as in the month of May of this year a small sideboard (45 in. wide) was sold at Christie's for ten guineas. It contained three drawers and was made up of mahogany without inlays on pine and beech. It was catalogued as "Sheraton," and was of just such a design as would be found in Shearer's "London Book of Prices." Shearer might have borrowed such a design from Sheraton or a fellow-member of the London Society of Cabinet Makers. It is anything but an easy matter to decide, and the auctioneer feels safe in the generic term "Sheraton." In the same catalogue we find a pair of Sheraton satinwood card-tables selling for ten guineas. These were of a rather bold grained satinwood banded with tulip-wood. There was nothing in the general make-up to suggest anything but the generic ascription. Another satinwood table, with two flaps supported on hinged brackets, about 28 in. wide and 39 in. long when open, sold for nine guineas. The top had slightly curved sides and shaped ends and finely made rule joints. It was banded with tulip-wood and decorated on top with a bold fan-shaped inlay surrounded with honeysuckle. This fan and honeysuckle, which may

be seen in Adam drawings at the Soane Museum, would suggest Adam influence although there was nothing in the general appearance of the table reminiscent of the accepted Adam furniture. We could imagine some maker of the Sheraton school adopting an ornament which would have been better applied to a table of architectural, or at least more severe, design. A Sheraton satinwood toilet-table 25½ in. wide with folding top banded with rosewood sold for twenty-two guineas. The lower portion consisted of a cupboard with concave tambour front, underneath which was a drawer lined with oak. The main structure had mahogany sides and was lined with mahogany. In outline it was distinctly reminiscent of Shearer, but the free use of satinwood would seem to preclude an ascription other than Sheraton. Without illustrations these four examples may convey little to the reader, but they are mentioned as pointing to the fact that even to-day, when Sheraton furniture is much sought after, it is possible to purchase dainty pieces of mahogany and satinwood of the Sheraton school at quite reasonable prices.

In a sale early in the year we find a Sheraton satinwood chest, 34 in. wide, with lift-up top forming a dressing-table and a drawer fitted

for a basin, selling for twenty-four guineas. An encoignure of mahogany and satinwood inlaid with honeysuckle ornament and laurel festoons sold for twenty-seven guineas, whilst a table with two drawers, writing slide, and stationery compartments, of satinwood with tulipwood bands, fetched twenty-one guineas. Such pieces—quite fine, but not finest, examples—catalogued as "from various sources," are still selling at prices which suggest "good investments."

The beauty of such things consists in simplicity of outline, delicate but restrained application of inlay, and, above all, mellow tones in the wood, which only age has brought about.

It is in the nature of such things that finely painted pieces of furniture should have a much higher market value than simple inlaid work. A finely designed piece of satinwood furniture embellished by the brushwork of a Pergolesi or an Angelica Kauffmann is probably the highest expression of English furniture ideals.

As examples of such things we give representations of two tables in the possession of Mr. George Stoner, of West Wickham, Kent. Fig. 53 represents one of a pair of side-tables, 4 ft. wide, made for Lord Nelson, and given by him to Lady Hamilton at Naples. The top of each

is beautifully painted with a half-circular design, in which is a classical figure *en grisaille*, a swag of flowers with cupids in the centre and a bunch of flowers at each end. The border is painted with peacock's feathers, trophies, and scrolls. Fig. 54, another Sheraton side-table, 5 ft. wide, is of satinwood inlaid and beautifully painted with classical portraits in medallions, bold festoons of flowers, ribbons, and trophies. The legs, not shown in the photograph, are square and tapering, and are painted with a leaf ornamentation.

These pieces rank as amongst the finest productions of the period. It is difficult to avoid superlatives in dealing with such things, exemplifying, as they do, the brushwork of a consummate artist applied to structures emanating from the workshop of a master craftsman—in the case of the Nelson-Hamilton tables, it is said, no less than that of Sheraton. We know, on the authority of Southey's "Life of Nelson," that the first meeting of England's Hero and Lady Hamilton took place at Naples in 1793 and that Sir William Hamilton was recalled from the Neapolitan Court in 1800. This fixes the date of the side-tables down to some time between those two dates; and we know that Nelson did not meet the fair Emma between

1793 and 1798, on the occasion of his second visit to Naples on the shattered *Vanguard*, after the Battle of Cape St. Vincent. It is possible that the tables were conveyed to Lady Hamilton on that occasion as a mark of personal esteem and gratitude for the services she had rendered the country during the prosecution of the war. Nelson was married to the young widow of Dr. Nisbet in 1787, and it is possible that the tables were made for him between that date and his appointment to the *Agamemnon* in 1793, quite possible but hardly likely, seeing that he spent most of his time whilst rusting on shore at his father's parsonage, ranging the countryside with a sporting gun at full cock, to the infinite danger of his associates, or birds'-nesting in the woods with his young wife.

Fig. 55, a satinwood secretaire, 5 ft. high and 27 in. wide, with cylinder front and upper part enclosed by glazed doors, is painted with floral designs. It stands on tapered legs of octagonal section. This piece relies for beauty less upon its painted decoration than upon balance of structural design and delicate contrasts of inlaid work.

This is also in Mr. George Stoner's collection, with the three following examples.

Fig. 56 exemplifies the potter's art as applied

to the decoration of furniture. A writing-table, 30 in. wide, with rising top and fitted side-trays. The central portion forms a writing or reading desk with rising mirror at back. The two side-drawers are inset with Wedgwood plaques, designed by Flaxman, representing "The Marriage of Cupid and Psyche" and "A Sacrifice to Hymen." Flaxman furnished designs for the Wedgwood factories from 1775 to 1787.

Fig. 57, of much simpler construction, is a cabinet of satin-wood banded and inlaid. The cupboard has an incurved front, the doors of which, with the sides, are filled in with trellised brass wire-work.

Fig. 58 is a severely simple example of the china cabinets of the period, one of a set originally made to fit the arched alcoves of an old Georgian house. Mr. Stoner has filled it with choice examples of porcelain eminently fitted for such a receptacle, mostly of Chelsea-Derby make and period (1776–1786). It is just such porcelain with which the wealthy collector of the Sheraton period would have delighted to fill his cabinets.

It will not be out of place here to leave the subject of furniture for a moment and take a glance at what was being done in the sister art, which had concurrently been brought to a like

perfection. There is a very intimate connection between the two arts. The best efforts of the potter called for something fitting from the cabinet-maker. A fine table presupposes fine table-ware, and *vice versâ* to some extent. The beginning of fine porcelain in England dates from 1744, when Heylyn and Frye at Stratford-le-Bow, claimed that they were manufacturing "chaney" ware equal to imported Oriental specimens. Between 1750 and 1768 Nicholas Sprimont was well at work on his masterpieces at Chelsea, when it is said that the dealers waited outside the factory eager to buy specimens immediately the kiln was broken. In 1776 the Chelsea factory was amalgamated with that of Derby (founded by William Duesbury in 1756), and Dr. Johnson, after a visit in 1777, observed "that he could have vessels of silver of the same size as cheap as what were here made of porcelain." The chief glories of Worcester were produced under Dr. Wall between 1751 and 1783. In 1765 Wedgwood founded the Etruria works, and by 1776 had invented his solid jasper ware, which he brought to perfection in 1786, and in 1790 he produced his marvellous copies of the Portland vase. Cookworthy, of Plymouth, discovered kaolin or China clay in Cornwall in 1765, and here we have the beginning

of true hard porcelain in England as distinguished from the soft paste of the previous decade. The Lowestoft factory was making soft paste in 1756 and hard paste in 1775. Champion was making the famous Burke tea service at Bristol in 1744, whilst Tebo was modelling his inimitable figures there about the same time. All these famous men and factories were, in the main, turning out costly vases and figures and richly decorated table wares for the plutocrats of the day, whilst humbler folk were being catered for by Whieldon, Turner, Wedgwood, Spode, and others in Staffordshire, and the Greens of Leeds, who were making their ironstones or cream wares, which were rapidly supplanting the old salt-glaze and clumsy English Delft wares of Fulham, Lambeth, Bristol, and Liverpool. Spode is credited with the invention of the "willow pattern," which for nearly a century and a half has been dear to the heart of the British housewife, and is still the fittest adornment for an old English dining-table.

We have said there is an intimate connection between furniture and pottery, but this not in the same sense as in the case of French furniture, whereon we often find porcelain plaques as much in evidence as the ormolu mounts. The application of metal purely for the sake of ornament

is the exception, rather than the rule, in English furniture, and the same with porcelain. Sheraton, in his "Drawing Book," in mentioning a commode in the Prince of Wales's drawing-room—which room, by the way, was very apparently not furnished by him—calls attention to the "freeze," which has "a tablet in the centre made of an exquisite composition in imitation of statuary marble. These to be had, of any figure or on any subject, at Mr. Wedgewood's, near Soho Square." In this he presumably points to Wedgwood's beautiful jasper cameo work for which John Flaxman furnished so many designs.

Before leaving the subject of the finer for the simpler articles (the *raison d'être* of this volume), we will proceed to illustrate a few more examples which, if not coming within the reach of the collector of moderate means, will serve as standards of taste in the Sheraton period furniture. The collector will start in an opposite direction and work upwards by easy stages, whereas these illustrations to some extent will be found to work in the opposite direction.

Fig. 59, a cabinet at the Victoria and Albert Museum (Official No. 636, 1870) is "veneered with satinwood: on the top is a small landscape in a half-oval compartment, outside which are festoons of leaves and naturally rendered flowers

and scrolls; a border of "eyes" of the peacock's tail runs round the whole of the top; the front is decorated with festoons of flowers and oval medallions also containing flowers." It is so described by Mr. Pollen in the Museum handbook.

Fig. 60 represents a dressing-table bought by the Museum for £200 in 1870. It is as difficult a matter to keep this illustration out of a Sheraton period book as it was for Mr. Dick to restrain from coming round to the subject of King Charles's head. It is the first article to arrest attention in the eighteenth-century section of woodwork at Kensington. It is veneered with satinwood and decorated with festoons of flowers painted in natural colours. The figure subjects in the oval panels are painted in *grisaille*, somewhat in the style of Angelica Kauffmann. The mounts are of silver. Angelica Kauffmann, the "Fair Angelica" of her biographers, was the infant prodigy of painting. Born in 1741 of Swiss parents—her father was a portrait painter—she was earning a considerable income by her brush at the age of nine and was a fashionable portrait painter at the age of eleven or thereabout. It is said that she painted the portraits of bishops, archbishops, and dukes. She was, at fifteen, a finished musician and the mistress of

four languages. It is small matter for wonder that with these attainments she was the rage of Rome. We have culled these particulars from Mr. R. S. Clouston's notes in "English Furniture and Furniture Makers." Mr. Clouston says: "She came to England in 1765, and at once became the fashion, both in social and artistic circles. She painted portraits of the King and the Prince of Wales, and became a personal friend of Queen Charlotte. She had proposals of marriage by the score, for she was amiable and beautiful as well as clever, but she paid heed to none of them, having fixed her affections (or possibly her ambition) on Reynolds. Though that confirmed old bachelor saw no reason for changing his condition, he not only found her work but actually employed her." We learn that she decorated two of Sir Joshua's marble mantelpieces with her brushwork. Mr. Clouston is of opinion that although the reintroduction of painted decoration as applied to English furniture may be accounted for in more ways than one, "it is by no means improbable that the vogue attained by this lady artist had much to do with its general adoption."

The Fair Angelica, whose full baptismal names were Marie Anne Angelique Catherine, was the victim of an unfortunate *mésalliance* with a

footman, whom she married believing him to be a nobleman. She afterwards married Zucchi, the Italian artist employed by Robert Adam, and left for Rome in or about 1780. This gifted woman, who died in 1807, was one of the original members of the Royal Academy, and it is thought her influence with Royalty had much to do with the granting of the charter.

Fig. 61, from a photograph kindly lent by Mr. C. J. Charles, of Brook Street, Hanover Square, represents a side-table 4 ft. 5 in. in length. It is of satinwood inlaid with conventional lines.

Fig. 62, also lent by Mr. C. J. Charles, represents a pair of satinwood card-tables of the Sheraton period. The photograph is arranged to show the one table closed with the top of the other table above to exhibit the details of the painted bands.

Fig. 63 is a square table with rounded corners, shutting up into a half-table by the back legs moving round. Satinwood painted with garlands of flowers. Date about 1790.

Fig. 64 is a toilet-table on six turned legs with fluted tops. It is of satinwood with painted border of interlaced wavy bands. The date assigned to it is about 1785. The photograph is reproduced by kind permission of Violet, Lady Beaumont.

Fig. 65, a work-table of satinwood; oval top bordered with dark wood; silk bag beneath. Date about 1780. Thomas Sheraton's name for such was a pouch table. This specimen is reproduced by kind permission of the Earl of Ancaster.

Fig. 66, a two-flap table of mahogany, with running border in satinwood inlay. There is a drawer on either side. Date about 1780. Reproduced by kind permission of Lord Middleton.

Fig. 67, a small mahogany table with tray top. It is inlaid with various woods. Date about 1780.

Fig. 68, a lady's workbox on stand; satinwood veneered and inlaid with darker woods in floral design. Date about 1780.

The last six examples, Figs. 63 to 68, were on loan some few years since at the Victoria and Albert Museum. They were all described as Sheraton with approximate dates given as above. Being photographed in groups, some idea of relative size of the articles is maintained. It is practically impossible to convey actual ideas of size when the exigencies of the book demand that the plates be uniform in measurement. The writer has avoided tiresome details of feet and inches except in cases where it has seemed essential.

Fig. 69, a simple Sheraton sideboard with five drawers on tapering legs with thimble toes, has the fan-shaped spandrils beneath the central drawer, a detail often found in sideboards of the period. This illustration is lent by Mr. F. W. Phillips, of Hitchin. The reader will do well to compare this with one on Fig. 35, taken from Shearer's book. Without being identical in any point there are distinct resemblances between the two pieces.

Fig. 70, in the possession of Mr. Springett, of High Street, Rochester, has a central drawer and cellaret at either end, with a tambour-shuttered cupboard beneath the central drawer. This piece, valued at £25, is built of mahogany lined with oak. The two Sheraton knife-cases shown in the same photograph have a value of from 35*s.* to 45*s.* each. These knife-boxes often undergo transformation at the restorer's hands, and are converted into stationery cases. As sideboard ornaments the knife-cases of Hepplewhite or Adam design are infinitely superior. These are more often vase or urn shaped, the tops rising on central pillars. Those of Adam design in particular rank as amongst the choicest expressions of art in eighteenth-century woodwork.

Fig. 71, a Sheraton tallboy chest of drawers, also belonging to Mr. Springett, is valued at

about £12. It is veneered with finely figured dark mahogany and lined with oak. The architectural cornice lends dignity to an eminently useful and commodious structure suitable for a large bedroom. A pleasing feature is the oval medallion in the centre of the cornice worked with a very choice piece of figured veneer.

Fig. 72 represents an interesting type of Sheraton period table on central pillar with claw base. It is often described as a sofa table. The two flaps are supported on hinged brackets. In the present instance the four brackets, which are nicely shaped, are hinged flush with the sides of the table. It is veneered with mahogany and inlaid with bands of satinwood. Some tables of this outline are of plain mahogany, and they are usually fitted with brass-mounted casters, often of fine quality. Such tables have an average value of about £5.

The pillar-claw table was essentially a product of the eighteenth century, and was the usual form in use as the dining-table in this country till the beginning of the nineteenth century, when its place was taken by the telescopic table. In Sheraton's "Dictionary" a plate dated 1803 shows a Grecian dining-table of semicircular form on six pillars terminating in double C-shaped supports ornamented with lion masks and rings.

Behind the table are three couches of concave outline and scrolled backs. In front of the table is a tall two-tier dumb-waiter with canopy surmounted by three candle sconces supported on a Greek fret bracket. Under same date Sheraton illustrates "occasional tables," fitted with chess and backgammon boards.

Fig. 73 represents a typical Sheraton simple dressing-table of mahogany inlaid with strings and bands of satinwood. Such pieces have an average value of about £4. The glass which surmounts it is rather unusual in its shield shape. The toilet-glass of the period is more often circular or oval. The supports are quite typical in shape. It is usual to find, as in this case, small turned ivory pateræ at the apex of the supports and also at the junctions of the curved parts with the small uprights. These toilet-glasses have a value of from thirty to seventy shillings according to size and decoration.

Fig. 74 is a corner basin stand referred to on p. 53. Belonging to the Sheraton period it might equally well be styled either Sheraton, Shearer, or Hepplewhite.

CHAPTER X: SHERATON, EMPIRE, AND TRAFALGAR PERIOD SEATS AND CHAIRS

We have it on the authority of Sheraton himself that cane-work as applied to furniture was reintroduced about 1770. In Victorian times cane-work was looked upon as rather a humble kind of seating to a chair and a fit finish to nothing which aspired to any dignity higher than bedroom furniture. But not so in Sheraton's day. It was placed cheek by jowl with the finest efforts of both the cabinet-maker and the painter.

Fig. 75 exemplifies the fact in a two-back painted settee set with medallions painted in the Kauffmann style. It belongs to a set of which, needless to say, the settee is simply the chair duplicated. We are indebted to Mr. Edward, of King Street, St. James's Square, for this illustration. Quite apart from the painted decoration, the graduated cane-work in the ovals is in itself quite a work of art. These fine chairs and settees are sometimes built of satinwood, but more often of beech japanned and afterwards decorated with fine brushwork.

Figs. 76, 77, and 78 represent a group of three very fine caned Sheraton period chairs, in the possession of Mr. George Stoner, of West Wickham, Kent. They are of satinwood painted with classical subjects and floral designs. The first of the trio (No. 76) is of such exceptional quality, both as to decoration and design, that one would like to label it "made by Sheraton and painted by Angelica Kauffmann." The painted medallion set in the fan-shaped cane-worked panel is in the Kauffmann style, and, whatever the name of the designer, it was made by a consummate craftsman. The diamond lattice-work between the two lower rails, the graceful upward sweep of the sides into the back posts and the scrolled top, to say nothing of the fan, all point to Adam design *in excelsis*. Fig. 78, though possibly well within the late Sheraton period, is, in the rounded knees and legs of curved outline, suggestive of "English Empire" or perhaps "Trafalgar" style.

Fig. 79, an illustration supplied by Mr. F. W. Phillips, is of a three-back settee in lacquered wood with caned seat. The reader will easily imagine the chair from which it is triplicated. It exhibits gracefully curved arms, turned legs, and well-designed horizontal splats. The details of the top rail will be found later on in an

arm-chair (Fig. 92). This settee has a value of about twelve guineas.

Fig. 80 is an armless two-chair back settee of painted wood, worked to imitate bamboo. The small turned balls add strength in addition to their decorative value. This piece has a value of six or seven pounds. The delicate workmanship and excellent design in this seat lifts it out of the common; but it is easy to imagine a step downwards to the simple spindle chair of the period with rush seat, and still another step lower to the Sheraton Windsor chair with hollowed-out wooden seat. The Windsor chair, pure and simple in detail, followed the prevailing mode of the day. (Naturally, being a product of the countryside, it would be somewhat belated in its following.) But we do not ever remember having seen the Windsor arm-chair duplicated or triplicated into a settee. Such things may exist as exceptions proving the rule.

Fig. 81 represents a Sheraton arm-chair of about 1760. It is built of mahogany. The six vertical balusters will be found as details in a Hepplewhite chair (Fig. 27), but the shaping of the arms points to Sheraton. This chair is the property of Mr. W. Hugh Spottiswoode, who kindly grants permission to reproduce the illustration.

Fig. 82 represents a chair at the Victoria and Albert Museum, concerning which a good deal of a controversial nature has been written. The Museum authorities have catalogued it as belonging to the early part of the nineteenth century, and in the style of Sheraton. The Museum handbook suggests that Sheraton's handiwork is probably seen in this chair. But, even if Sheraton built it, it is just such a chair that Adam would have designed for the music-room of one of his great houses. The suggested date ("early nineteenth century"), if correct, would preclude the idea of Sheraton having had any hand in its construction.

Fig. 83, in which the four vertical balusters support a broad top rail inlaid with a serrated border, belongs to the latter part of the eighteenth century. The lower back rail, the uprights of the backs, and the upper faces of the arms are all delicately reeded. The small carved terminals to the back posts are often found in Sheraton chairs with vertical balusters.

Fig. 84 is an arm-chair of graceful proportions, built of mahogany with fine details of reeding and grooving in the arms and back (period about 1780), exhibited some years since in the loan collection at South Kensington, the property of Mr. Henry Willett, of Brighton.

Fig. 85 is an upholstered arm-chair of Sheraton period, from a photograph lent by Mr. F. W. Phillips.

Fig. 86 has a finely worked back showing distinct Adam design. This example was lent to the Victoria and Albert Museum by Mr. W. H. Evans, of Forde Abbey. The cross-rail will be found repeated in a simple chair (Fig. 93).

From the time of Chippendale right on to the end of the eighteenth century English furniture seemed to be passing through a natural and very gradual course of evolution mainly in the direction of lightness coincident with the use of lighter woods, principally satinwood. Cause and effect on this point are self-apparent and hardly call for comment. It goes without saying that French fashion was the dominant factor in furniture, and particularly in the more pretentious furniture of the Sheraton period. In much of the Chippendale furniture we can see suggestions of late Louis XV. styles in its flamboyant outlines and heavy carving. All through the subsequent design books we meet with illustrations and descriptions of "French chairs," "Chairs with French feet," &c. &c. The only two clock-cases illustrated by Sheraton are of French origin, and he says "they require no explanation." The elaborate beds illustrated by Ince and Mayhew

and Sheraton do not suggest any development, on pure English lines, from the older time furniture. The Adam chairs and sofas when not built to accord with the Adam classical architecture are frankly French in feeling. It does not appear that English people ever took very kindly to the more florid styles made in imitation of the French productions. But as French furniture developed on simpler lines in the late Louis XVI. taste we find its influence on this side of the Channel increasing by leaps and bounds. We use the term simpler lines in relation to the actual outlines of the furniture rather than to its decoration. The elaborate display of choice and costly woods used in the form of marquetries and inlays, the richly chased ormolu mounts and priceless porcelain insets scarcely had their counterparts on English furniture. These embellishments were purely the productions of consummate French artists indigenous to French soil. English efforts in the same direction were merely tentative and scarcely successful.

The downfall of the monarchy in 1793 naturally checked any marked development in French furniture for the time being, whilst the establishment of the First Empire eleven years later quite as naturally called for new things to suit the temper of the times. It is but a figure of speech to say

that the Emperor called for Imperial furniture: for, unlike the race of dilettantes of the old régime recently dethroned, Napoleon was far too busy consolidating his Empire to have much to say in matters of art. But the Empire called for something of an Imperial nature in household adornments, and obviously it must be something quite apart from the old order of things. A chair must be an Imperial throne or at least a Consular seat. England must needs follow suit; and this not from any love of the French Empire or her Emperor. The result was the style familiarly known as English Empire. That it, at any rate for the time being, took a firm hold of the furniture-makers and furniture-buying public is very apparent; and that it was, in the main, in the very worst of taste is equally apparent. Even Sheraton, who was capable of better things, was compelled by sheer force of circumstances to fall into line—one might almost say he was starved into it. Presumably the public had no further use for his "Drawing Book" with all its excellences, exhibiting, as it did, styles in English furniture which, try how we may, we shall probably never improve upon—styles which even though they came in many instances from France were at least translated into good English.

The public must have Anglo-Imperial-cum-Trafalgar styles, and we find Sheraton publishing in 1804–1807 his "Encyclopædia" series of plates, which, simply because they are the latest vogue, must be, if we are to believe him, quite the finest things the world had seen. These plates exhibit a perfect nightmare of furniture with motifs consisting of a whole menagerie of impossible animals, a fully equipped arsenal, and an assortment of ship's chandlery sufficient for the outfit of a three-decker. Much of this very latest fashion must have been made to celebrate Nelson's Egyptian and Spanish victories, culminating in the Battle of Trafalgar. In one plate we have a draped window through which is seen a ship, presumably the *Victory*, riding at anchor.

English-Empire furniture was probably never made out of any compliment to the French nation, seeing that it was the sheer duty of every true-born Briton to hate France, Frenchmen in general, and the Little Corporal in particular. But it is quite certain that the Egyptian-Trafalgar styles were expressions of the nation's pardonable idolatry of her greatest naval hero.

These Near-Eastern influences lasted for some considerable period. In 1823 "Grecian stools," "Roman chairs," and kindred styles must have

been in full fashion, judging from the plates in the "London Chair Maker's and Carver's Book of Prices for workmanship as regulated and agreed to by a committee of Master Chair Manufacturers and Journeymen." The edition of 1823 was probably a reissue called for by some necessity in the trade. "Supplements" in the book are dated 1808 and 1811, and the work is referred to as having been published in 1802. It may be slight evidence on which to argue the point. The absence of the accepted Sheraton School patterns from the book does not necessarily prove that such things had altogether fallen into disuse. The prices of the older pattern were possibly arrived at from the early publications, whilst it was considered necessary by the trade to have a supplemental schedule dealing with the latest productions. One thing is quite certain, and that is that Græco-Roman patterns in chairs and stools were very prevalent during the first decade of the nineteenth century.

In 1807 Thomas Hope published a book of engravings dealing with interiors and furniture of Roman form. He claimed that the consolidation of Freedom—the result of the Revolution—in France had restored in that country the pure taste for the antique styles of Greece, and we have,

in his own words, in his mouldings, "antique Roman fasces, with an axe in the centre: trophies of lances, surmounted by a Phrygian 'Cap of Liberty': winged figures emblematical of freedom; and antique heads of helmeted warriors arranged with cameo medallions." He describes mahogany chairs inlaid with metal and ebony, and claims that such decorations are better than dust-collecting relief carvings. The process of stamping out the wood and metal with the same dies was, of course, none other than the old buhl work applied to chairs instead of cabinets. Such forms in furniture were probably suggested by discoveries in the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum, then only recently excavated; but as few people were able, or even cared, to live in houses founded on the old Pompeian models, furniture as depicted by Thomas Hope could have had but little vogue in England, although Hope said: "At Paris they have been carried to a great deal of excellence and perfection." In May of the present year a set of ten carved mahogany chairs, in the Thomas Hope style, with lyre-shaped backs (six with tapestry and four with carved seats) sold in a London auction-room for £30.

Fig. 87 is a chair of beechwood, painted and gilt, with seat of plaited cane. The Victoria and Albert Museum assigns this to the early part of

last century. The continuous curve of the back post seat-rail and front leg is typical of the Trafalgar period.

Fig. 88, a chair given by Sir James D. Linton, R.I., to the Victoria and Albert Museum, is a fine example of an Empire hall seat. It is built of mahogany, and finely carved with two eagles' heads on an " Amazon " shaped shield.

Figs. 89, 90, and 91 represent three painted chairs, which might with some good reason have been placed in the Adam section of the book. They were photographed whilst on loan at the Victoria and Albert Museum. These chairs, the property of the Hon. Sir Spencer Ponsonby-Fane, K.C.B., who has kindly granted permission to reproduce them, were catalogued as Adam, and the dates given were respectively 1800, 1790, and 1780. The centre chair (Fig. 90), with the X front legs and carved sphinx on each arm-post, exhibits salient features of the Trafalgar period furniture. The oval rosettes at the bases of the arm-posts and the honeysuckle and rosette on the top are Adam decorations. Fig. 89 has brass mounts and characteristic Adam features. The suggested year, 1780, for Fig. 91 probably antedates this chair some twenty to twenty-five years. These chairs are at Brympton, Yeovil. The owner states that to the best of his belief they

have been at Brympton ever since they were made.

Fig. 92 is an arm-chair quite simple in outline but of excellent design. It is of solid dark mahogany throughout with the exception of the seat frame, which is veneered on beech. The diamond lattice back has small cup disks at the intersection of the bars. The back posts and top faces of the arms are reeded. The front legs and arm-posts exhibit finely proportioned turnery. The ends of the top rail are turned and grooved, whilst the centre is square with a small inset panel of finely figured wood. This chair was purchased for £3, which price included the cost of re-upholstering in striped horsehair cloth copied from original material.

Fig. 93, another solid mahogany chair of late Sheraton period, has a top rail carved with a draped festoon and conventional palmette foliage suggesting Adam influence. The front legs, back posts, and cross-bars are reeded. This chair, including the restoration and re-upholstering, cost £2 in mid-Somerset.

Fig. 94, a chair with an oval panel superimposed on a lattice-work slat, has a suggestion of English Empire style in the carved animal's feet at the bottom of the arm-posts. The method of joining the arms to the back posts is rather

unusual. It will be noticed that the arms, which terminate in scrolled volutes, sweep down from the top of the chair, and, instead of being mortised or butt-jointed, are pinned to the side-posts in a manner which gives them the appearance of being movable. The pins are covered with turned discs. This chair, the property of Mr. F. W. Phillips, has a value of a little under £7. Chairs of the calibre of the last three examples are desirable acquisitions either in sets or as oddments. As single examples they are very naturally less expensive. The arm-chairs are in no sense easy-chairs, but, like the singles, serve as dainty occasional seats. Usually built of rich dark mahogany on unobtrusive lines, they scarcely ever strike a discordant note. The specimens under consideration seem little the worse in frame for a century or more of wear and bid good to last as long again with ordinary care. Lack of available space must serve for an excuse for not illustrating any Sheraton period upholstered tub chairs. The type is well known, with its comfortable seat and rounded back, but it does not appeal strongly to the collector, inasmuch as beyond the legs there is nothing showing of the ancient wooden structure, and it is in the nature of such things that the covering has been renewed over and

over again. One cannot help reflecting that people of the nineteenth century must have been easily pleased when they were content to discard the roomy wing chairs and tub chairs of the eighteenth century for the hard buttoned seats of little ease, known in Victorian times as "ladies' easys."

Figs. 95, 96, and 97 exemplify three chairs of very late Sheraton development, which have been placed in juxtaposition for close comparison as to details. They belong to a period approximating to 1820. Two of these (Figs. 95 and 97), rely for decorative value upon colour tone of fine mahogany and simplicity of treatment. The third (Fig. 96), built of beech, relies upon elaboration of ornamental details, consisting of relief carvings and marquetries of brass. We cannot help feeling that there is a painful straining after effect in the over-elaboration of the lower back rail, on which the rectangular panel of marquetry has the appearance of having been placed as a plaster to heal or hide a fracture. We can imagine a set of such chairs with mixed influences—Sheraton, Hope, Adam, Empire—adorning the dining-parlour of Mr. New-Rich some hundred years ago; and then we can see the taste of the solid merchant or banker in the two mahogany chairs (Figs. 95 and 97). Almost any dealer

would describe these as Adam chairs ; and, indeed, there are slight suggestions of Adam influence in the carved and pierced lower cross-rails. There are thousands of houses up and down the country still clinging to sets of such old-fashioned chairs, generally upholstered in black horsehair. The reader will recognise their natural home in the comfortable four-square old white painted house with mid-Georgian doorway and door, brass knocker and name-plate and wire-gauze blinds to the front ground-floor windows to keep out the vulgar gaze of the passer-by when, as is often the case, the house is built without forecourt right on to the sidewalk. Such houses (maybe in the middle of the High Street or just on the outskirts of the smaller provincial towns) are inhabited by the third generation of the family solicitor or doctor or the descendant of the old local banking firm with five or more names on its cheque heading. Sets of these chairs frequently come into the market, and may be acquired at from eight to ten pounds the half-dozen, with a pound or two added if there is fortunately an arm-chair to match. Such chairs are of varying degrees of merit, both as to design and workmanship, but the material is almost invariably of the best. It will be noticed that the top rails, broad and bent to fit the back, are

sometimes simply fastened across the fronts of the uprights, whilst others, mortised into the side-posts, are finished off with scrolled tops. The broad top rails as well as the curved front legs in chairs of the period are details found in the old senatorial seats familiar to us in classic sculpture.

The writer is indebted to Messrs. Horsfield Brothers, of the East Anglian Galleries, 19 Orchard Street, Portman Square, for photographs of a fine Chippendale pattern Windsor arm-chair and a pair of Norfolk or Suffolk Sheraton period chairs (Figs. 98, 99, and 100).

A whole volume might well be written on old furniture of the English countryside, carrying us from the oak stools, chairs, and settles of Elizabethan and Jacobean times—through the ladder-back rush-seated chairs of Lancashire and Yorkshire and the Chippendale Windsor chairs of South Buckinghamshire down to the turned spindle chairs of the end of the eighteenth century. Such are essentially English in their expression and things quite apart from all Venetian, Dutch, French, or Trafalgar influences.

Messrs. Horsfield Brothers have kindly supplied some notes, which are here quoted *in extenso:*

"EARLY ENGLISH BENT-WOOD CHAIRS

"These chairs were the successors of the early spindle chairs and oak Yorkshire chairs of the Jacobean period, and the earliest were probably made at the beginning of the reign of Queen Anne at High Wycombe in Bucks, and are generally known as Wycombe Chairs. The early type, like the finer chairs of the period, had the plain back splat and four cabriole legs with club feet. Following the character of the other chairs of the Chippendale period, the later chairs had fretted and sometimes carved splats until about 1780, when the most popular form was found to be the 'wheelback,' and was practically the sole pattern turned out from that date.

"The great charm of these chairs is the variety of English woods with which they are made, being generally yew, plum, apple, pear, or cherry, and rarely ash, as at present. These woods, with time, take on a very lovely polish, and as the chairs were made from mixed saplings in the green, in order to bend them successfully, one finds chairs with apple, plum, and cherry mixed, which gives a very pleasing effect.

"Of the best form of bent-wood chairs ever made in England, are those made from 1780 to 1820 at Mendlesham in Suffolk, and Scole in

Norfolk, and known as Mendlesham or Norfolk chairs. Tradition has it that they were made by two brothers, who had been apprentices of Sheraton, the great cabinet-maker, and the beautiful lines of the chairs and the artistic finish of the inlays and turnings certainly tend to confirm the tradition. At one time, nearly every farmhouse in Norfolk or Suffolk could boast of several of these chairs, but they have gradually drifted into collectors' hands, and are now cherished as examples of some of the best country cabinet-maker's work of the eighteenth century."

. . . . .

The writer of this little book remembers on a May morning some years ago during a country ramble through the uplands of South Bucks, on the fringe of the Penn Country, from Stoke Poges and Burnham Beeches to Beaconsfield, straying into a beech wood just short of the little lace town. It was just one of those walks described somewhere as "a journey to anywhere in search of the whatever." The "whatever" in this case was a peep at the Windsor chair industry. Those who have travelled in Brittany may have happened on the sabot-maker deep in the woods, where, with his family, he lives and works all summer through in a hut of hurdles and heather — workshop, bedroom, kitchen, and

parlour all in one—shaping, with his queer tools, winter-felled branches into good Brittany sabots. Here, at home, but twenty miles from the heart of London in the Buckinghamshire beech wood, was the English equivalent. Under the leafy platforms of the mighty beeches, in amongst the grey-green trunks, was a rude shelter of furze-woven hurdles, open to all the winds of heaven, but shelter enough from the few drops of rain which might filter through the leafy canopy. There was the chair-spindler at work on legs and spars for Wycombe chairs. A foot treadle-lathe and a few turning-chisels all his tools, and a stack of beechwood all his materials. An open-air occupation as clean as the white chips falling from his chisel, and as sweet as the scent from the last autumn's leaves lying deep in the beech wood.

With memories of the purring of the chair-spindler's wheel, the flecks of dappled sunshine on the moss cushions, and the cheeping song of the willow-wren in the undergrowth, we will leave the spindler to his toil and this book to the reader.

FIG. 1. A DOME BED

FIG. 2. BACK STOOLS

(From Ince and Mayhew's "Universal System")

FIG. 3. HALL CHAIRS

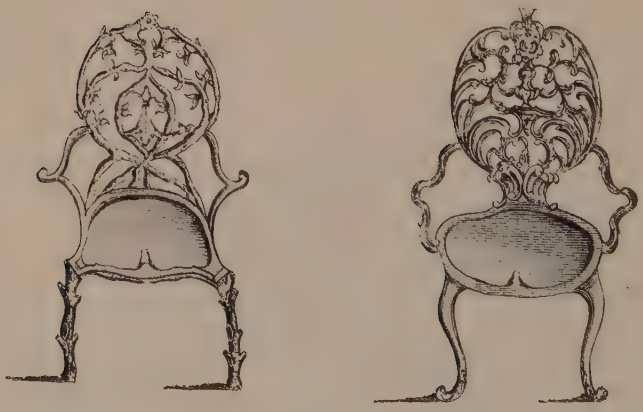
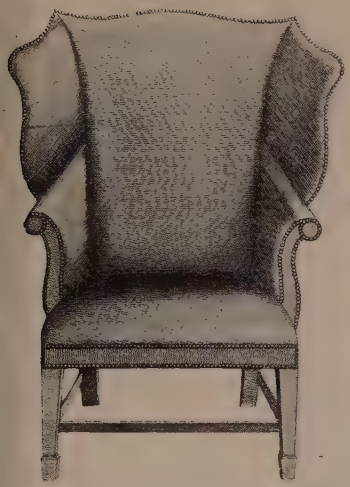
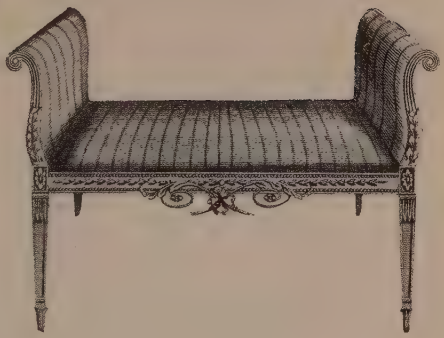
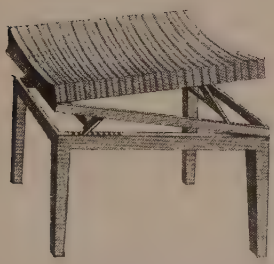


FIG. 4. SUMMER-HOUSE CHAIRS
(From Manwaring's "Chair Maker's Friend")







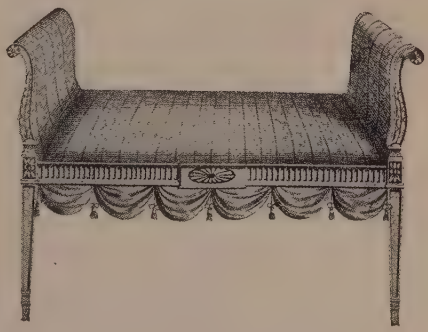
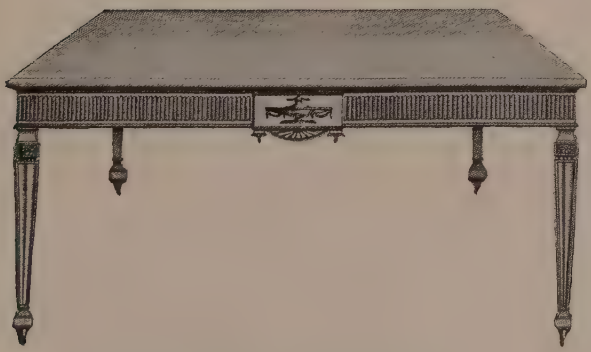


FIG. 5. EASY CHAIR AND "GOUTY STOOL"

FIG. 6. WINDOW STOOLS

(From Hepplewhite's "Guide")

FIG. 7. COUCH
(From Hepplewhite's "Guide")



FIGS. 8 AND 9. SIDEBOARDS
(From Hepplewhite's "Guide")

FIG. 10. DOUBLE CHEST OF DRAWERS

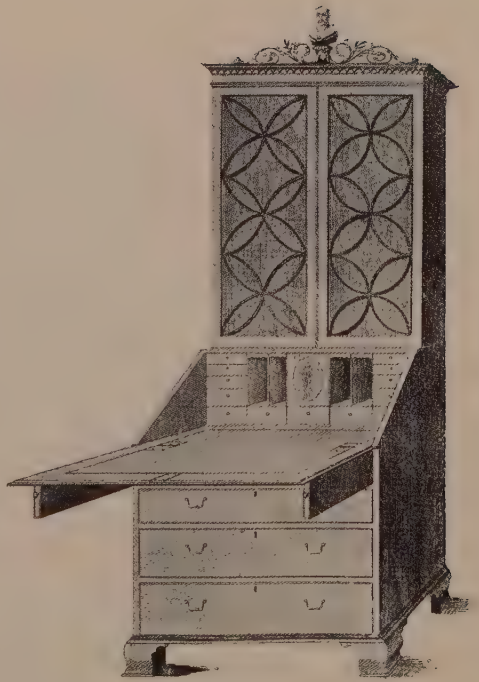


FIG. 11. DESK AND BOOKCASE

(From Hepplewhite's "Guide")

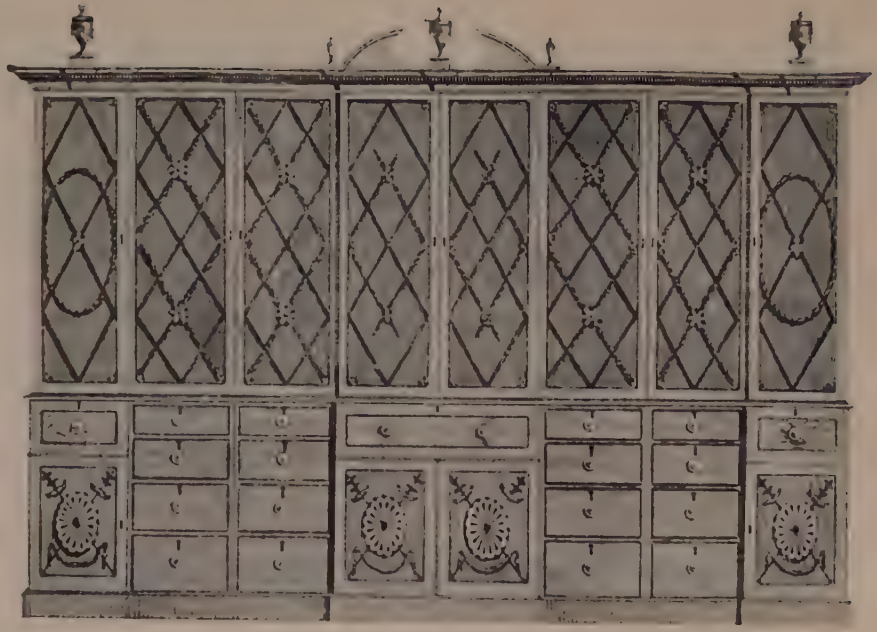


FIG. 12. LIBRARY CASE
(From Hepplewhite's "Guide")

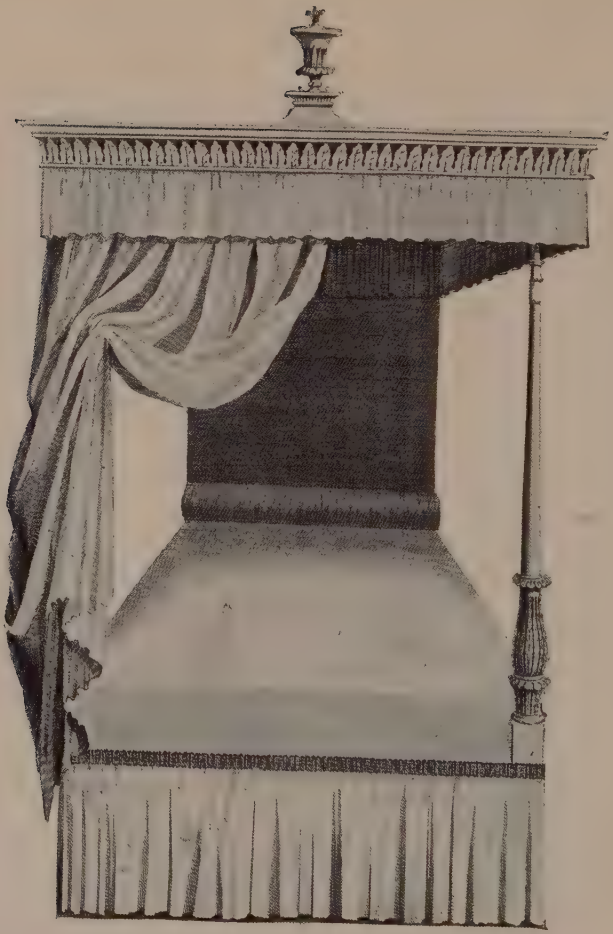


FIG. 13. DESIGN FOR A BED
(From Hepplewhite's "Guide")

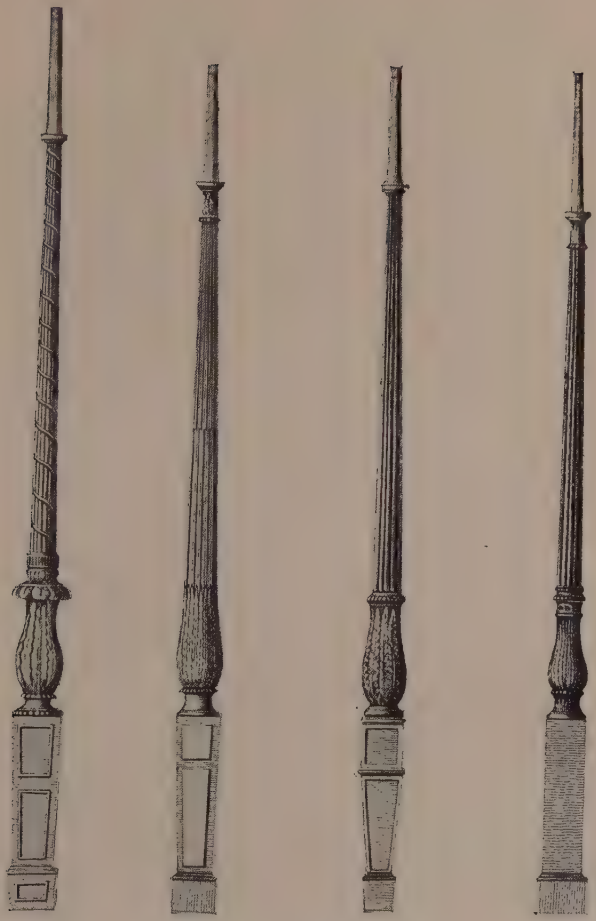


FIG. 14. BED PILLARS
(From Hepplewhite's "Guide")

FIGS. 15 AND 16. HEPPLEWHITE CHESTS OF DRAWERS

FIG. 17. HEPPLEWHITE WARDROBE
(The property of Mr. F. W. Phillips, Hitchin)

FIG. 18. HEPPLEWHITE SIDEBOARD
(The property of Mr. J. H. Springett, Rochester)

FIG. 19. HEPPLEWHITE SETTEE
(The property of Mr. F. W. Phillips)

FIG. 20. HEPPLEWHITE CANED SETTEE
(The property of Mr. F. W. Phillips)

FIG. 21. HEPPLEWHITE CHILD'S SWINGING COT

FIG. 22. HEPPLEWHITE BURGERE CHAIR
(The property of Mr. Reginald Flint)

FIGS. 23 AND 24. HEPPLEWHITE CHAIRS
(The property of Mr. C. J. Charles)

FIG. 25. HEPPLEWHITE "WHEAT-EAR" CHAIR

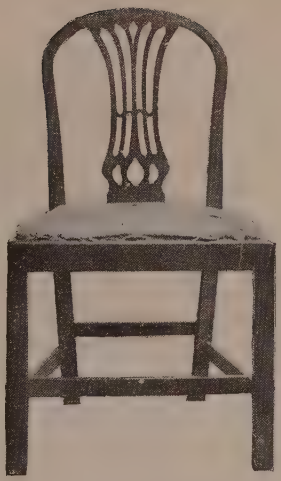


FIG. 26. HEPPLEWHITE OAK HOOP-BACK CHAIR

FIG. 27. SIMPLE ARMCHAIR

FIG. 28. SHIELD-BACK CHAIR

FIG. 29. HEPPLEWHITE CHAIR SHOWING ADAM INFLUENCE

FIGS. 30 AND 31. HEPPLEWHITE CHAIRS WITH OSTRICH PLUME DECORATIONS

FIG. 32. FINE HEPPLEWHITE ARMCHAIR OF CARVED WALNUT

(At the Victoria and Albert Museum)

FIG 33. FINE HEPPLEWHITE MAHOGANY ARMCHAIR, INVERTED SHIELD PACK

(The property of Mr. F. W. Phillips)

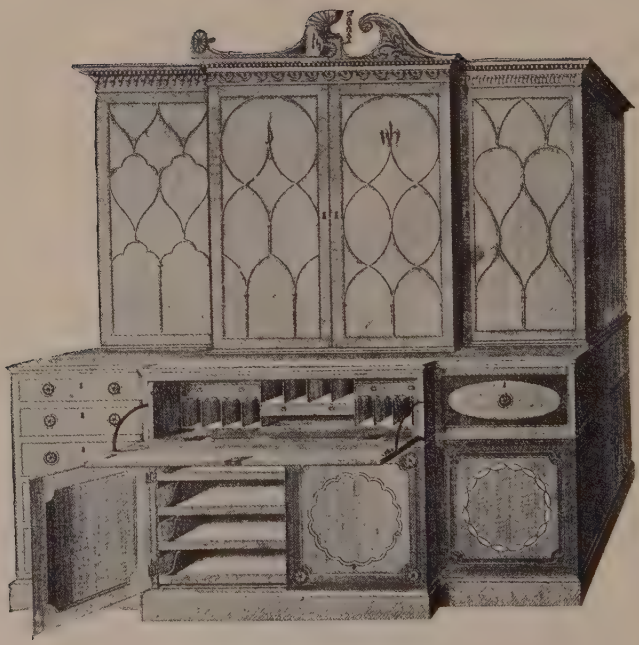


FIG. 34. BREAK-FRONT WRITING-DESK
(From Shearer's "Book of Prices")

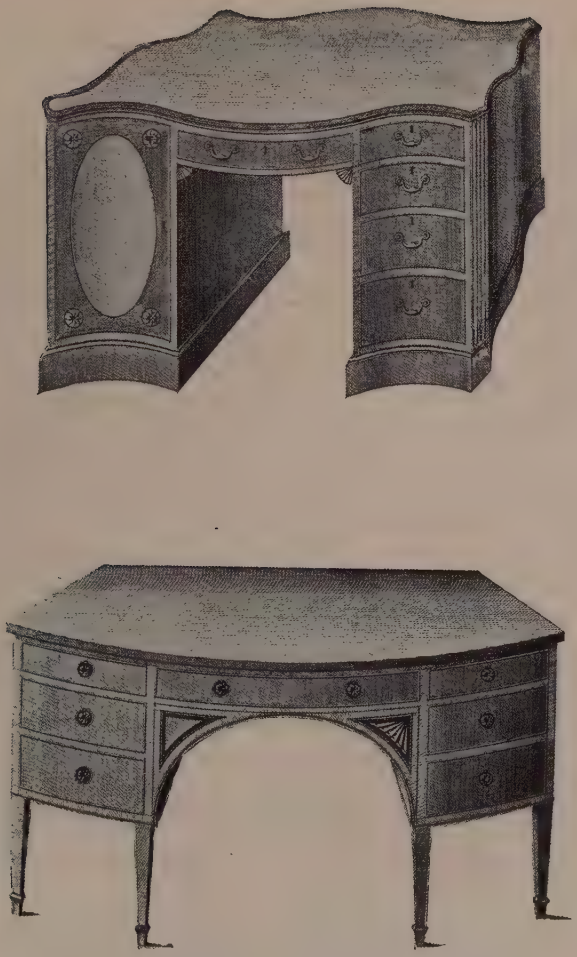


FIG. 35. KNEE-HOLE WRITING-TABLE AND BOW-FRONTED SIDEBOARD

(From Shearer's "Book of Prices")

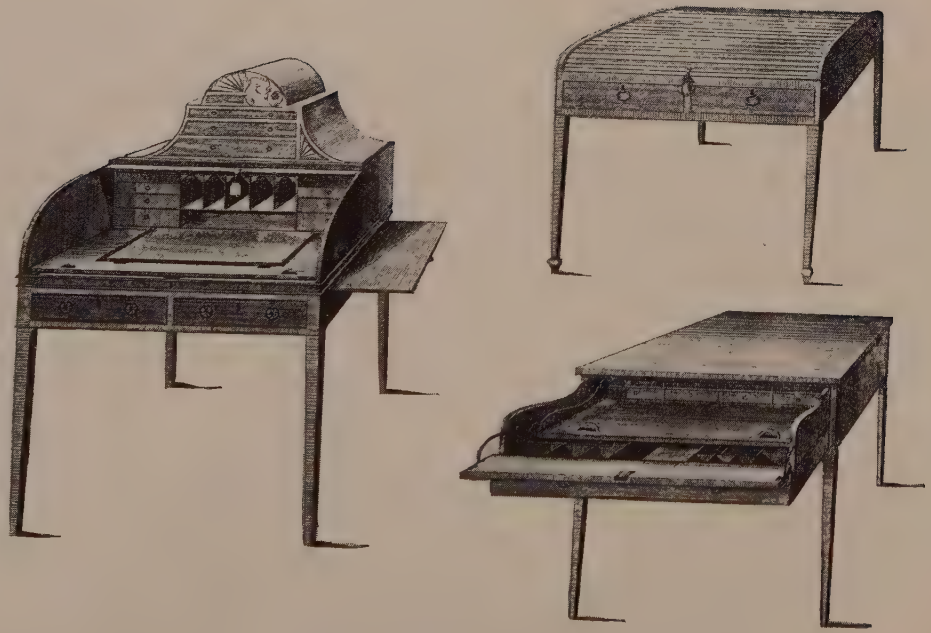


FIG. 36. WRITING-TABLES
(From Shearer's "Book of Prices")

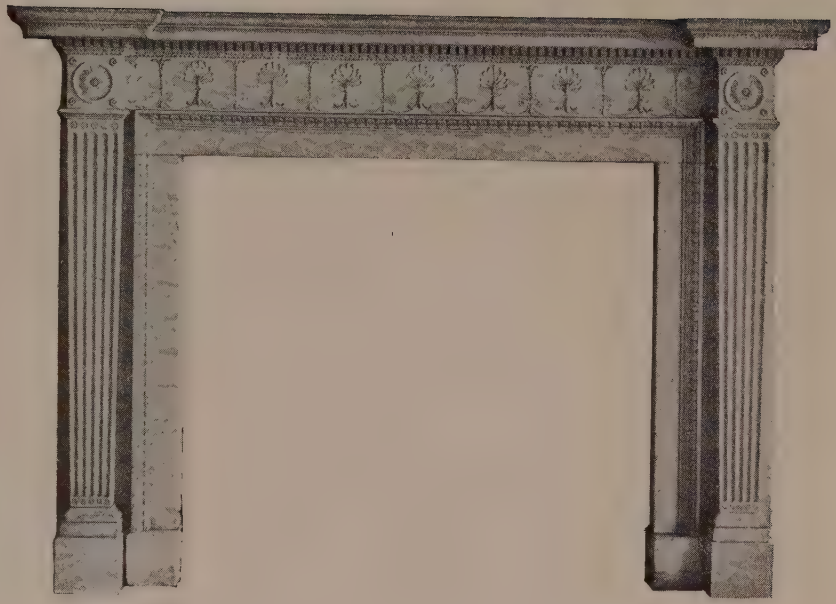


FIG. 37. ADAM MARBLE MANTELPIECE
(At No. 5 Adelphi Terrace)

FIG. 38. ADAM MARBLE MANTELPIECE
(At No. 10 Adelphi Terrace)

FIG. 39. ADAM DOORWAY
(At No. 2 Adam Street, Adelphi)

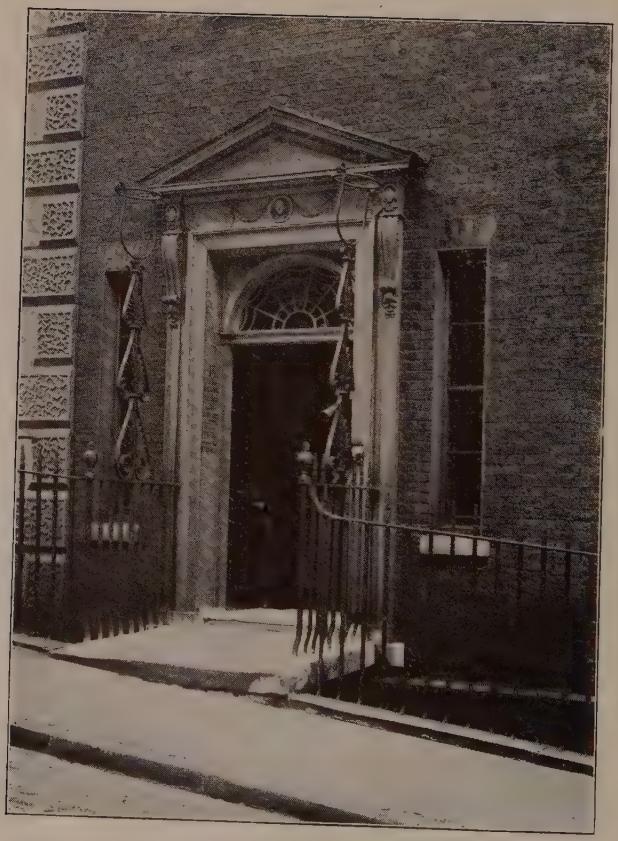


FIG. 40. ADAM DOORWAY
(At No. 13 John Street, Adelphi)

FIG. 41. ADAM SIDE-TABLE
(The property of Mr. C. J. Charles, 27 and 29 Brook Street, W.)

FIG. 42. ADAM SIDE-TABLE
(The property of Mr. C. J. Charles)

FIG. 43. ADAM SIDE-TABLE
(The property of Mr. J. H. Springett, Rochester)

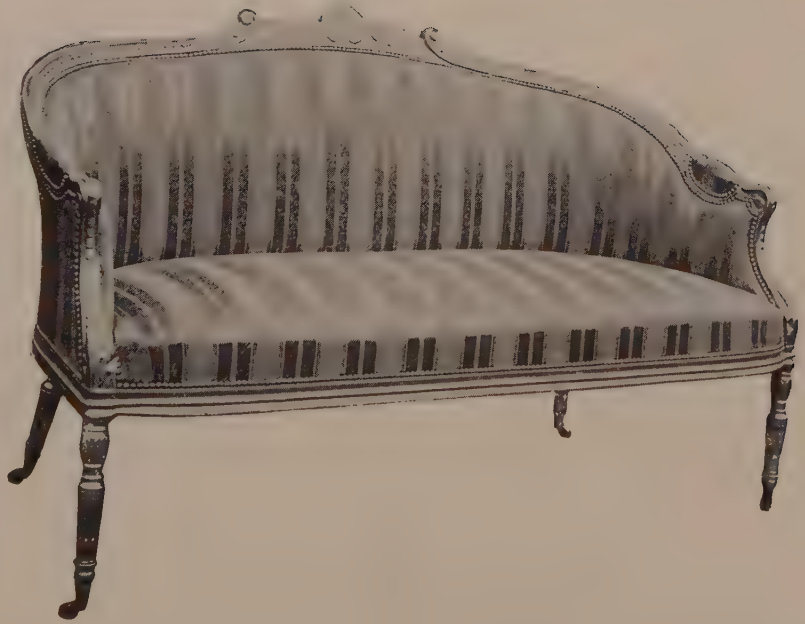


FIG. 44. ADAM SETTEE

(The property of Mr. F. W. Phillips, Hitchin)

FIG. 45. ADAM SETTEE

(The property of Mr. F. W. Phillips, Hitchin)

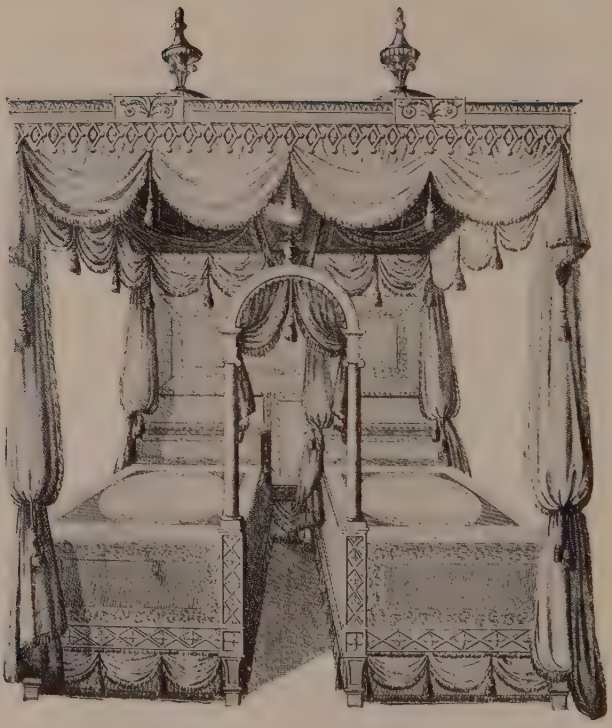


FIG. 46. A SUMMER BED

(From Sheraton's "Drawing Book")

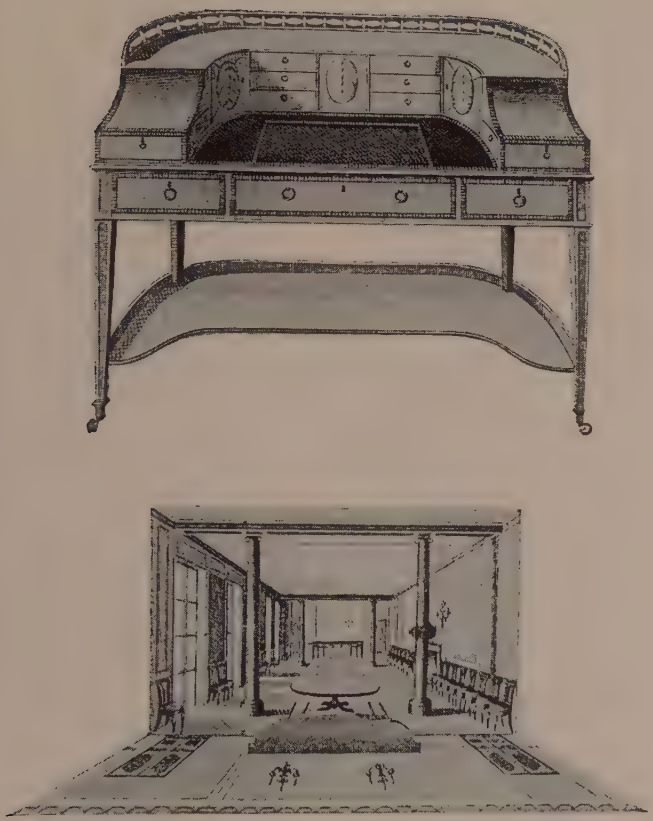


FIG. 47. WRITING-TABLE AND THE PRINCE OF WALES' DINING-PARLOUR

(From Sheraton's "Drawing Book")

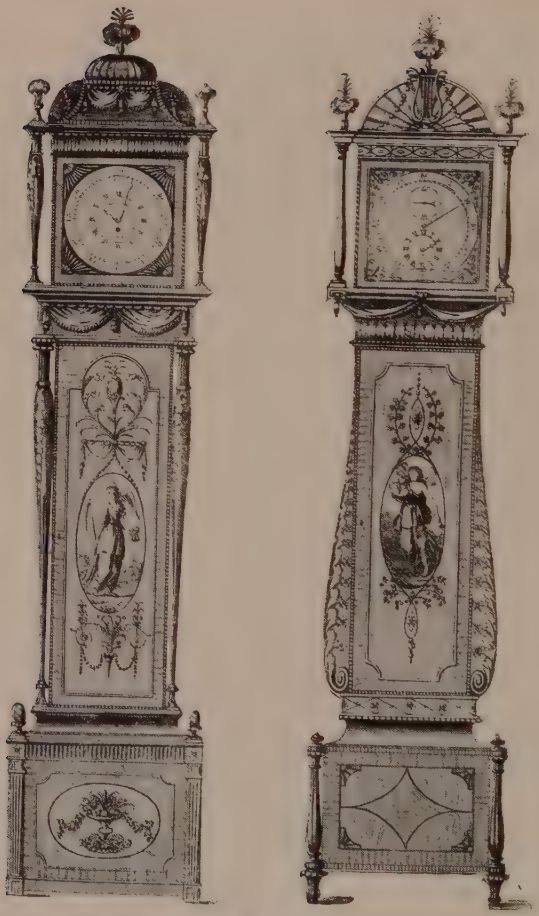


FIG. 48. LONG CASE CLOCKS
(From Sheraton's "Drawing Book")

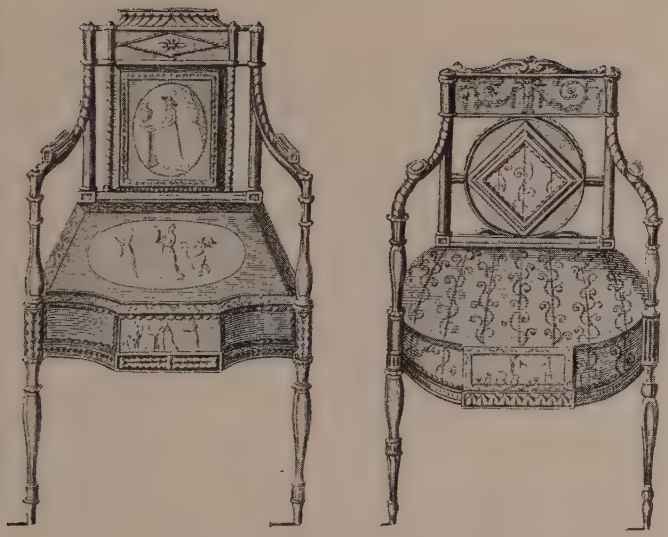


FIG. 49. DRAWING-ROOM CHAIRS
(From Sheraton's "Drawing Book")

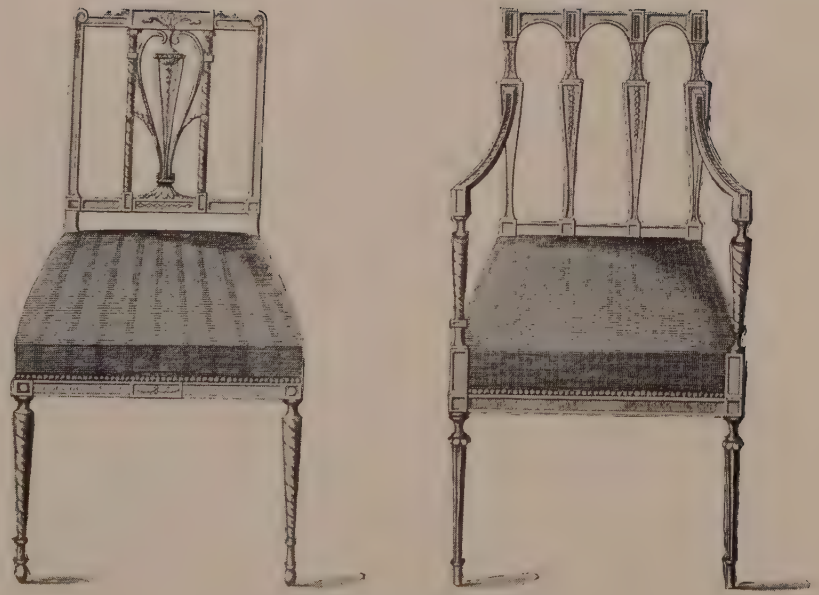


FIG. 50. DINING-PARLOUR CHAIRS
(From Sheraton's "Drawing Book")

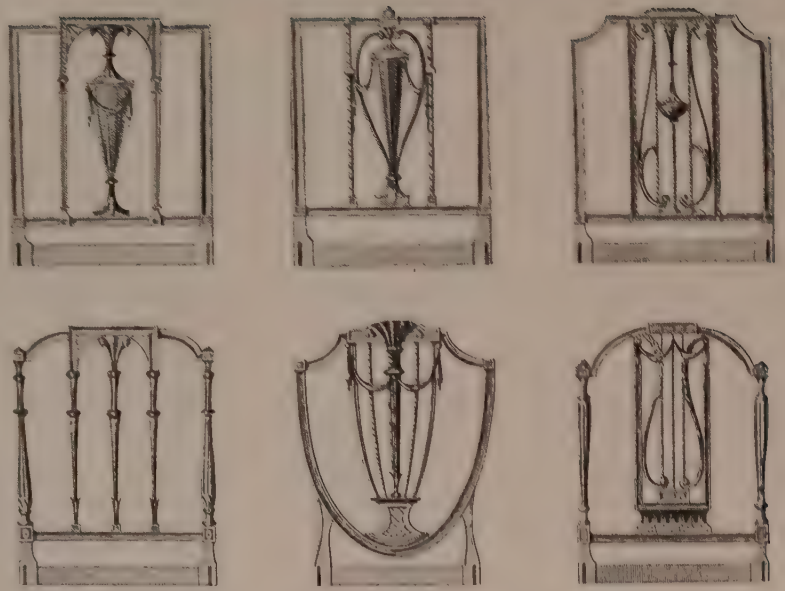


FIG. 51. CHAIR-BACKS
(From Sheraton's "Drawing Book")

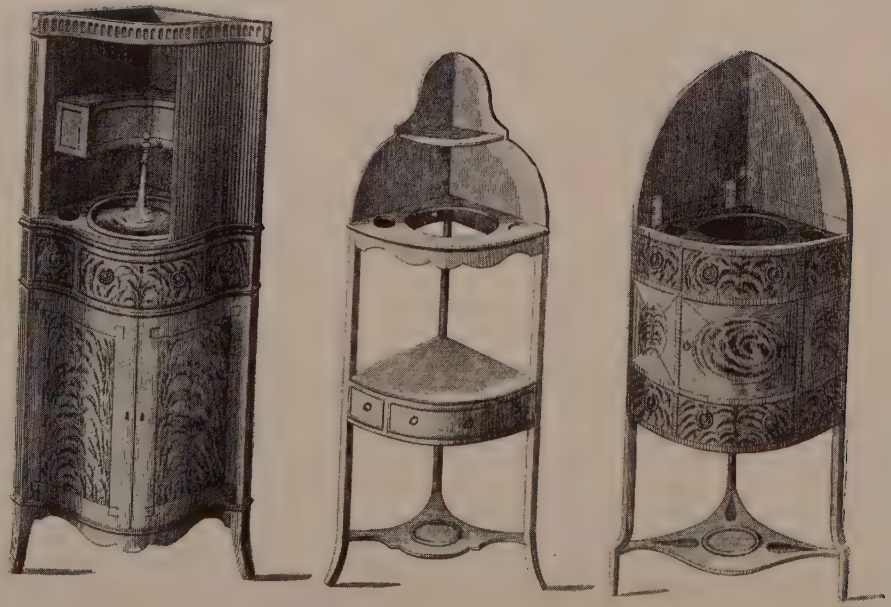


FIG. 52. CORNER BASON-STANDS
(From Sheraton's "Drawing Book")

FIG. 53. SHERATON SIDE-TABLE. GIVEN BY LORD NELSON TO LADY HAMILTON
(The property of Mr. George Stoner, West Wickham, Kent)

FIG. 54. SHERATON SIDE-TABLE. INLAID AND PAINTED SATINWOOD
(The property of Mr. George Stoner)

FIG. 55. SHERATON SECRETAIRE. INLAID AND PAINTED SATINWOOD

(The property of Mr. George Stoner)

FIG. 56. SHERATON WRITING-TABLE INSET WITH WEDGWOOD PLAQUES

(The property of Mr. George Stoner)

FIG. 57. SHERATON CABINET
(The property of Mr. George Stoner)

FIG. 58. SHERATON CHINA CABINET
(The property of Mr. George Stoner)

FIG. 59. SHERATON CABINET, PAINTED SATINWOOD
(At the Victoria and Albert Museum)

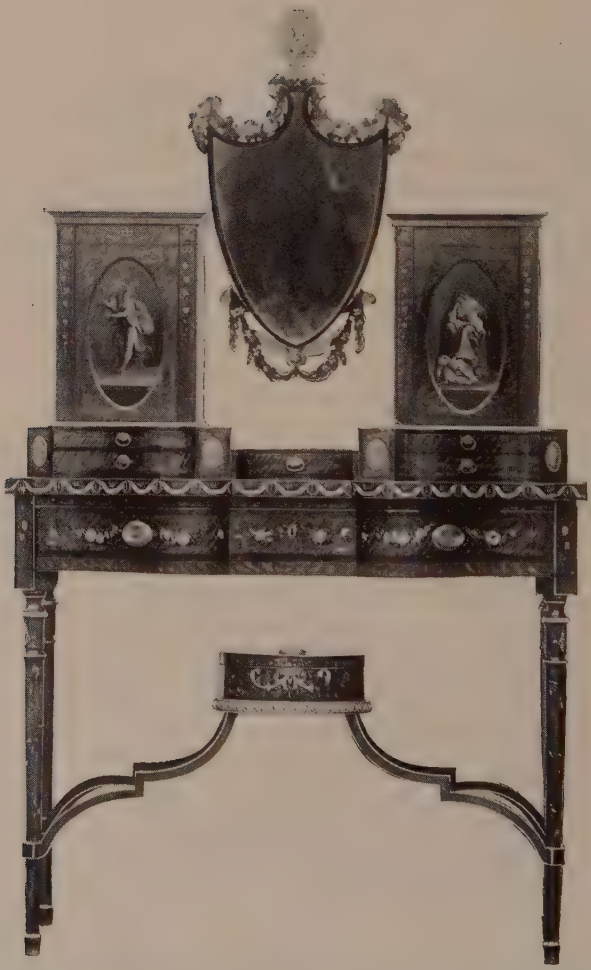


FIG. 60. SHERATON DRESSING-TABLE, PAINTED IN THE STYLE OF ANGELICA KAUFFMANN

At the Victoria and Albert Museum)

FIG. 61. SHERATON SIDE-TABLE
(The property of Mr. C. J. Charles)

FIG. 62. PAIR OF SHERATON CARD-TABLES
(The property of Mr. C. J. Charles)

FIG. 63. SHERATON FOLDING TABLE.
PAINTED SATINWOOD

FIG. 64. SHERATON TOILET-TABLE
(The property of Violet Lady Beaumont)

FIG. 65. SHERATON WORK-TABLE
(The property of the Earl of Ancaster)

FIG. 66. SHERATON MAHOGANY TABLE
(The property of Lord Middleton)

FIG. 67. SHERATON TABLE WITH TRAY TOP

FIG. 68. SHERATON WORK-BOX ON STAND

FIG. 69. SHERATON SIDEBOARD OF SIMPLE OUTLINE
(The property of Mr. F. W. Phillips)

FIG. 70. SHERATON SIDEBOARD AND KNIFE-CASES
(The property of Mr. J. H. Springett)

FIG. 71. SHERATON TALL-BOY CHEST OF DRAWERS
(The property of Mr. J. H. Springett, Rochester)

FIG. 72. SHERATON TWO-FLAP TABLE WITH CLAW-PILLAR BASE
(The property of Mr. J. H. Springett, Rochester)

FIG. 73. SHERATON DRESSING-TABLE AND GLASS

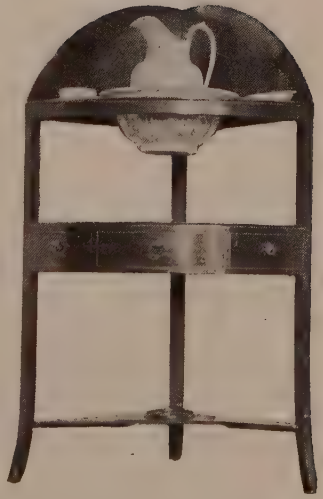


FIG. 74. SHERATON PERIOD CORNER BASON-STAND

FIG. 75. SHERATON TWO CHAIR-BACK SETTEE
(The property of Mr. Edward, King Street, St. James' Square, S.W.)

FIGS. 76, 77, AND 78. SHERATON PERIOD CHAIRS
(In the collection of Mr. George Stoner, West Wickham, Kent)

FIG. 79. SHERATON THREE-CHAIR-BACK SETTEE. LACQUERED WOOD AND CANED SEAT

FIG. 80. SHERATON TWO-CHAIR-BACK SETTEE. PAINTED WOOD AND CANED SEAT

(The property of Mr. F. W. Phillips)

FIG. 81. SHERATON PERIOD ARMCHAIR

(The property of Mr. W. Hugh Spottiswoode)

FIG. 82. SHERATON PERIOD LYRE-BACK CHAIR

(At the Victoria and Albert Museum)

FIG. 83. SHERATON PERIOD CHAIR WITH TYPICAL FEATURES

(At the Victoria and Albert Museum)

FIG. 84. SHERATON PERIOD ARMCHAIR WITH TYPICAL REEDING AND GROOVING

FIG. 85. SHERATON PERIOD UPHOLSTERED ARMCHAIR

FIG. 86. SHERATON PERIOD CHAIR SHOWING ADAM INFLUENCE

FIG. 87. LATE SHERATON TRAFALGAR TYPE CHAIR. PAINTED AND GILT BEECHWOOD

(At the Victoria and Albert Museum)

FIG. 88. ENGLISH EMPIRE HALL CHAIR

(At the Victoria and Albert Museum)

FIGS. 89, 90, AND 91. CHAIRS WITH ADAM FEATURES
(The property of the Hon. Sir Spence Ponsonby-Fane K.C.B.)

FIG. 92. SHERATON PERIOD ARMCHAIR

FIG. 93. SIMPLE CHAIR WITH ADAM FEATURES

FIG. 94. ARMCHAIR WITH ENGLISH EMPIRE FEATURES

FIG. 95

FIG. 96

FIG. 97

FIGS. 95 AND 97. EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY MAHOGANY CHAIRS

FIG. 96. EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY CHAIR OF CARVED BEECH WITH MARQUETRY OF BRASS AND MAHOGANY. (At the Victoria and Albert Museum.)

FIGS. 98, 99, AND 100. HOOP-BACK WINDSOR ARMCHAIR, AND PAIR OF NORFOLK OR SUFFOLK SHERATON PERIOD CHAIRS

(The property of Messrs. Horsfield Bros. East Anglian Galleries, 19 Orchard Street, Portman Square, W.)

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